

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



113 620

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY















TO FAR WESTERN ALASKA  
FOR BIG GAME







STEVE'S CABIN ON KILLEY RIVER, WITH HANK, LODGE, AND ANDY

# TO FAR WESTERN ALASKA FOR BIG GAME

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF  
TWO JOURNEYS TO ALASKA  
IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE

BY  
THEODORE R. HUBBACK

AUTHOR OF "ELEPHANT AND SELADANG HUNTING IN MALAYA," "THREE MONTHS  
IN PAHANG IN SEARCH OF BIG GAME," ETC. ETC.

WITH 67 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND 3 MAPS

LONDON: ROWLAND WARD, LTD.  
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1929



PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

-

DEDICATED TO  
MY MANY FRIENDS IN ALASKA  
AND TO  
JOHN A. McGUIRE  
OF *OUTDOOR LIFE*, IN WHOSE MAGAZINE  
AN ACCOUNT OF THESE JOURNEYS WAS  
FIRST PUBLISHED

Was there aught that I did not share  
In vigil or toil or ease,—  
One joy or woe that I did not know,  
Dear hearts across the seas?

RUDYARD KIPLING.

-



## FOREWORD

R. W. SERVICE has written: "The Yukon usually does one of three things to a man: it makes him, it breaks him, or he goes slightly crazy". Substitute "Alaska" for "The Yukon" and the dictum would still hold good.

Alaskans are inclined to refer to their country as that of the tin can and the dog. Both play an enormous part in the life of the prospector and pioneer.

But to those who have journeyed to that country of vast areas to hunt for the species of wild game that are to be found there, many memories remain far beyond those of the tin can and the dog.

To stand on the rugged crest of one of the many unnamed mountains of Alaska, and to see all round you many dozens of similar crests equally unnamed and unknown, is a sensation which is seldom experienced except by the few whose privilege it has been to reach some very remote corner of the earth.

There are still sections to be reached in this great country where wild life is absolutely undisturbed,

and where man seems to be an intruder, although at first his presence is not even resented by the wild occupants of these regions.

It was my luck, on my second journey to Alaska, to visit such a portion of this country and to find animals which were quite unaware that their worst enemy, man, had discovered their distant retreat.

I made two journeys to Alaska, my first one more or less following the footsteps of previous hunters in the Kenai Peninsula. I had a successful trip, and obtained specimens of moose and sheep, as related in the first part of this book.

I had a very enterprising guide with me, Andy Simons, who is well known to everyone who has hunted on the western side of Alaska, and when talking matters over with him, after we had finished our hunting on the Kenai, I decided, if possible, to return at some future date to Alaska to try to get into territory which previous hunting parties had never reached.

In looking over a comparatively recent map of Alaska, it appeared to me that there was a large stretch of country which was little known between the Susitna and Kuskokwim Rivers, where the south end of the Alaska Range divided the valleys.

I felt that we ought to be able to find sheep in the range; one knew that there were moose all over the Kuskokwim and Susitna watersheds; and there should certainly be bears.

I was unable to get much information about the hunting possibilities, except that when some prospectors had been near that area some years previously much game had been seen, including woodland caribou.

This sounded like the place I wanted to go to, and when I left Seward on my long journey back to the Malay Peninsula I promised Andy that I would come back if I could possibly manage it, and then we would make the trip into the Kuskokwim country.

Well, I did get back to Alaska, we did make the trip, and I got everything in the way of trophies, excitement, and adventure that an exacting hunter could desire.

But before going north I went west to the Alaska Peninsula for brown bears, and after spending a month there made my way to Seward and Anchorage.

The second part of this book describes the hunting of the Alaska brown bear in the Peninsula and the hunting of moose, sheep, and woodland caribou in the Susitna-Kuskokwim country.

I still have the feeling that I want to visit Alaska again and hunt once more the wonderful sheep and amazing brown bears; to see again the lordly bull moose silhouetted against the dazzling snow, or feeding lazily amongst the willow patches on the gravel bars of the mountain streams; to watch with un-

feigned admiration the glorious beauty of the woodland caribou; ay, even to feel again the fierce caress of the hand of an Alaskan winter; but one gets no younger, one's wind gets no longer, the mountains become strangely steeper, and *fugit irreparabile tempus*.

T. R. H.

LONDON, 1928.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	vii

## PART I

CHAP.		
I.	SINGAPORE TO SEWARD . . . . .	3
II.	FROM SEWARD TO THE SHEEP COUNTRY—THE ENTRY INTO THE BENJAMIN CREEK VALLEY	11
III.	STALKING THE WONDERFUL WHITE SHEEP OF ALASKA . . . . .	21
IV.	THE GIANT MOOSE ( <i>ALCES GIGAS</i> ) OF THE KENAI PENINSULA—CONCLUSION . . . . .	47

## PART II

I.	THE JOURNEY . . . . .	75
II.	WEST, VERY FAR WEST . . . . .	83
III.	IN BEAR LAND . . . . .	97
IV.	<i>URSUS GYAS</i> . . . . .	117
V.	THE SKWENTNA RIVER AND IDITAROD TRAIL .	135
VI.	<i>OVIS DALLI</i> . . . . .	158
VII.	PTARMIGAN VALLEY . . . . .	181
VIII.	THE IRON HAND OF WINTER . . . . .	196
IX.	THE END OF THE TRAIL . . . . .	212
	INDEX . . . . .	229





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Steve's cabin on Killey River . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Black fox, "Jack", at Cottonwood Creek . . . . .	16
Black bear, Killey Valley . . . . .	20
Benjamin Creek . . . . .	26
Killey River near Steve's cabin . . . . .	30
Two <i>Ovis dalli</i> rams shot in Killey Valley . . . . .	32
Black bear, Killey Valley . . . . .	40
Moose country and sheep mountains, Kenai Peninsula . . . . .	46 and 48
Benjamin Creek and Funny River, Kenai Peninsula . . . . .	52
Towing our boat up the Kenai River . . . . .	54
Bull moose photographed on Kenai Peninsula . . . . .	54
Moose shot on Kenai Peninsula, 53 in. spread . . . . .	56
Killey Valley in the moose country . . . . .	70
Bears' bathing pool . . . . .	98
Rocks on the plain near Izembek Creek . . . . .	98
Female bear . . . . .	106
Camp near the headwaters, Izembek Creek . . . . .	106
Mountains at the head of Izembek Creek . . . . .	112
Bear trails in valley of Izembek Creek . . . . .	112
Female bear . . . . .	122
Large male brown bear . . . . .	122
Valley of the Skwentna River . . . . .	134
"Brownie" after having jumped overboard . . . . .	142
"Brownie" and his horse box . . . . .	142
Susitna Station and the launch <i>J. J.</i> . . . .	142
Camp near the Skwentna Crossing . . . . .	144
Towing our boat up the Skwentna River . . . . .	144
Through the Canyon, Skwentna River . . . . .	150
Lunch on the bank of the Skwentna River . . . . .	150

# xiv TO FAR WESTERN ALASKA

	FACING PAGE
On the trail near Hughes Lake . . . . .	152
Harding Lake . . . . .	152
General map . . . . .	154
Sketch map . . . . .	156
Skwentna River and Valley of Hayes River . . . . .	157
Ben and horses with sheep trophies . . . . .	158
A beautiful specimen of <i>Ovis dalli</i> . . . . .	160
Sheep mountains, Kuskokwim Valley . . . . .	164
Two <i>Ovis dalli</i> rams . . . . .	168
Camp on Rock Cony Creek . . . . .	178
Ptarmigan Valley ; after the day's work . . . . .	180
Ben and moose . . . . .	184
Caribou . . . . .	188
"The Guardians" and Kuskokwim River . . . . .	188
Bull moose . . . . .	190
Ben with caribou . . . . .	190
Mounted head of moose with 63½ in. spread . . . . .	192
Kuskokwim and Hartman Rivers . . . . .	196
Valley of the Hartman River . . . . .	196
Mounted head of caribou . . . . .	200
Andy and the fourth caribou after blizzard . . . . .	202
Trail near Happy River Road House . . . . .	202
Styx River . . . . .	204
"The Guardians" at the mouth of Styx River . . . . .	204
Our small tent near the Styx . . . . .	206
The last of the horses . . . . .	206
Jack Lean's tent . . . . .	206
Anderson's Road House . . . . .	208
Jack Lean and Charlie Schultz at door of Road House . . . . .	208
Happy River Road House and Jack Lean's dog team . . . . .	210
The trophies at Susitna Station . . . . .	211
Caribou shot near Styx Camp . . . . .	212
Map of Alaska showing Author's Route . . . . .	<i>In Pocket</i>

·

# PART I

·



## CHAPTER I

### SINGAPORE TO SEWARD

There's the lure of the snow-mantled vastness,  
There's the lure of each valley and hill,  
Of friends that you've met that you'll never forget,  
And you'll want to come back—and you will.

PAT O'COTTER.

I WAS fortunate enough to come across a very interesting book called *Hunting in the Arctic and Alaska*, by E. Marshall Scull, and from the information that I gleaned from Mr. Scull's account of his shooting in the Kenai Peninsula, I laid my plans. I take off my hat to Marshall Scull, because he has been able to write the class of book which, besides being extremely interesting regarding sport, is also able to convey to those ignorant of the country how to follow in the writer's footsteps, and not many people can do that. Having read this book, Alaska was not a strange land to me when I arrived there, and I would recommend all those going to Alaska in pursuit of game to read Mr. Scull's book.

The journey from Singapore, which is about one degree north of the Equator, to Seward, which is about sixty degrees north of the Equator, took me nearly two months. First I had great difficulty in getting a connection with the Pacific Mail's steam-

ship *Ecuador*, on which I had a reservation, and which was scheduled to leave Hongkong on the 14th of August. At last, with very little time to spare, I got a passage on a steamer whose principal business is carrying Chinese coolies from Singapore to China and *vice versa*, which steamer advertised a limited amount of first-class accommodation. The only thing about the accommodation allotted to me that was first-class was the cost. I found on arrival on the ship that my cabin was surrounded by Chinese, many of them babies, and I did not quite see how on earth I was to get in and out without treading on one of them, and possibly causing unpleasant results. And then if we had bad weather? When ordinary people are seasick it is bad enough, but to be cooped up with seasick Chinese would be about the limit. I struggled about and found a Chinaman who said he was the chief steward, and he told me that there were two cabins on the bridge deck near the captain's quarters which were the ones that were generally occupied by Europeans. This sounded better, so I made tracks up "top-side." Soon my troubles were cleared away. First the chief officer, a Liverpool man like myself, and then the captain, introduced themselves, and shortly after we were under way the captain asked me to share his state-room with him and mess in his quarters, so I only used the cabin on the bridge deck to dress in. We were far away from the undiluted effluvium of the Chinese passengers, and I must say that, thanks to Captain Page, I never enjoyed a trip more than this one from Singapore to Hongkong. We coasted close to the Cochin China coast, and the captain told me of much big game close to the coast which was practi-

cally undisturbed. Two sorts of wild cattle—rhinoceros in the mountains, elephant a little farther inland—and tigers in abundance. He himself had made a trip into the interior of Tongkin not very long before, and had had good sport. Perhaps I may have a trip there some day before I get too old for jungle hunting, but for the meantime the word is “Alaska”, and I won’t listen to anything else.

We arrived at Hongkong in time to catch the *Ecuador*, which eventually departed three days late, owing to a typhoon which raged within a few miles of Hongkong.

My voyage across the Pacific was uneventful. We had good weather and an extremely comfortable ship. We stopped nowhere very long—a few hours at Woo-sung; we did not go up to Shanghai, at the mouth of the Yangtse Kiang; only visited one port in Japan—Yokohama—where we stopped about six hours; got into Honolulu late in the afternoon, and only saw the city by night; and finally arrived at San Francisco about a month after we left Hongkong, on a wet afternoon, which spoiled the glorious view, one of the sights of the Pacific Coast, of the Golden Gate, the entrance to San Francisco. It was now the middle of September, and I did not want to waste any time in getting to Alaska, so I left San Francisco the next evening for Seattle by train. The Shasta Limited had been taken off the run, due to war restrictions, so I had to make the best of a slower train. We changed at Portland, and arrived at Seattle in the evening of the second day out from San Francisco, and made for our hotel.

Next day I got busy to find out how soon I could



get a steamer to Alaska, and found to my great joy that the good ship *Alaska* was leaving the following day, going direct to Cordova, and that I would be able to reach Seward in six days from Seattle. I had now to bustle about and find out how to obtain my big game permit for Alaska, as we would not be touching at Juneau, where the Governor's office is, and I did not want to arrive in Seward and then have to wait there until I could get my permit. I visited the Alaska bureau of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, but unfortunately Mr. McPherson, the secretary, was away, and the lady in charge of the bureau could not give me any information as to how I could obtain a permit, except from Juneau. I visited several Government offices, but could get no "dope" on the subject, so I finally returned to the Seattle bureau, looked through the Game Regulations, and arrived at the conclusion that I could obtain a permit by cabling the amount of the fee to the Governor at Juneau. With the very kind assistance of the manager of the Bank of California I managed to do this, and with great promptitude and courtesy the secretary to the Governor cabled me to Cordova that the fee had been received, and that my licence was being forwarded to the game warden at Seward. He also cabled the game warden the same information. Not all Governments are as prompt.

We left Seattle on the 18th of September on the steamship *Alaska* of the Alaska Steamship Company, with only a few passengers. It was my very great privilege to meet on this trip E. O. McCormick, sometime vice-president of the Southern Pacific Railway, who was on his way to Alaska as the head of

a commission appointed by the Government to make inquiries into the possibilities of development, etc., in that country. We had a delightful trip, beautiful weather, with just that feeling in the air conveying the "pep" of the North land, for which I have so often longed in the sweltering heat of the Tropics.

We had hoped to make Cordova on Saturday night, but unfortunately a heavy sea and rain squalls came up in the afternoon, and the captain did not attempt to make the entrance, so we hung about outside all night. It was rather uncomfortable, but with the daylight we soon found our way in and tied up to the wharf at Cordova about mid-day.

I had read in a Seattle paper that there was a hunting party in Alaska who had gone in from Cordova, the chief of the party being Mr. McGuire of Denver. I had been talking to Mr. Morgan, the purser of the *Alaska*, about this party on the way up, so when the purser went ashore to get the mails, etc., and was informed that Mr. McGuire and party had returned from the interior and were then at the Windsor Hotel, he sent word to me accordingly. I lost no time in going up to the Windsor Hotel, and very soon had the pleasure of meeting Mr. McGuire and his friends. We had quite a little chin-wag together—it does not take long for hunters from any part of the world to fraternise—and my only regret was that our meeting was such a short one. Mr. McGuire presented me with Mr. Sheldon's book on the *Wilderness of the Upper Yukon*, which I much appreciated, and enjoyed reading later on.

We left Cordova at midnight, and the following day touched at Valdez and Port Liscum, and then

on to La Touche, where we arrived at midnight. The next day we loaded copper at La Touche, and as we had to wait there until the afternoon, Mr. Morgan arranged for a trip in a motor launch up the bay to fish for black bass. Mr. McCormick, Mr. Morgan, and myself went out, but unfortunately the only launch we could obtain was unable to control its gasoline engine so that it could go slow enough for successful trolling, and our bag only amounted to four fish. It was cold, but great fun, and we all enjoyed it. After leaving La Touche we made for Seward, and came in for a pretty rough two or three hours when we got outside the protection of Montague Island. We coasted close to the mainland in making the mouth of Resurrection Bay, and most magnificent scenery it was. The glaciers coming right down to the water's edge, the towering mountains behind showing now and again through the storm-driven mist and spray as we wallowed in the heavy sea, made a scene that I shall never forget.

Seward was in semi-darkness on our arrival, a storm a few days before having washed away the electric light connections, and the wharf to which we tied up was lit by flares which made everything look very weird and wild. We had hardly tied up when a gentleman came up to me and asked me if I was Mr. Hubback, and I said I was. He immediately informed me that Andy Simons was up at the hotel. I answered that I was very pleased to hear it, but who was Andy Simons. "He's your guide, and I'm Mr. Sexton of Sexton's Hotel, where you are going to stop." This sounded all right—guide and accommodation all arranged. I no longer felt like a stranger

in a strange land; in fact, I don't think I ever felt that way from the moment I landed. Alaska people know how to take care of that. One could not find greater kindness or hospitality anywhere in the world than in American territory. Mr. Sexton said that he had a transport wagon ready for my luggage, and that we could go up to the hotel any time. However, I wished to say good-bye to Mr. McCormick and other friends first, and so remained a few minutes longer on the *Alaska*. Mr. McCormick introduced me to Mr. Weir, the engineer in charge of the Alaska Northern Railway, now under Government control. He asked Mr. Weir to be good enough to help me on my journey to the interior—and very useful that introduction was, because the railway had been much damaged by the late flood—and, entirely due to Mr. Weir's efforts, I was able to get up to Kenai Lake without much delay. However, everything has to come to an end some time or other, and after saying good-bye to my friends on the *Alaska*, I went up with Mr. Sexton to his hotel, and was very soon introduced to some of the citizens of Seward. Andy Simons was not in the hotel at the moment, but came in presently, and I was soon talking to him about our future movements. Previous to this, however, one of the officers of the steamship *Alaska*, who had come ashore with me, and who was a personal friend of Dr. Baughman, the game warden, took me up to the doctor's house to introduce me to him. It was a little late, being after ten o'clock, and when we went up to the house I had a shrewd suspicion that the worthy doctor was in bed, but I was in my friend's hands and supposed it was all correct. Dr. Baughman greeted me with much kindness, and

told me that everything was quite all right regarding my permit, and that I was the only person hunting in the Kenai this season on a non-resident game licence. He also told me that I was very lucky to have been able to get hold of Andy Simons as my guide, as he had a very high reputation with those hunters whom he had taken out.

We soon went back to Mr. Sexton's hotel and arranged with Andy Simons to get our outfit of stores, etc., the next day, hoping to get away the following day to Kenai Lake, where Andy had a cabin, and from whence we would start the real journey into the game country.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM SEWARD TO THE SHEEP COUNTRY—THE ENTRY INTO THE BENJAMIN CREEK VALLEY

Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—  
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

AFTER spending a most comfortable night I awoke to find a dull morning which soon turned into rain. However, I did not mind that; if it rained now we might possibly expect fine weather later on when we were in the hunting country, and considering that there had been very bad weather during the last few weeks in Seward, I anticipated fair weather in the "offing".

After breakfast with Andy at the nearest eating house, where they did us extremely well, we started out on our business of obtaining stores for our month's sojourn in the interior. I had brought up with me from Seattle what I required regarding personal outfit—sleeping bag, small tent made of paraffined silk, pack sacks, a small cooking outfit, and the necessary rifles. I had brought with me from the Malay States a .375 double-barrelled, high-velocity rifle made by Cogswell & Harrison of London. This rifle, which carried a 270-grain bullet and fired forty grains of

cordite, was a first-class weapon, but not quite the style of rifle which is generally used by hunters in pursuit of mountain sheep, where most of the shooting would be at a fairly long range. Also, I was not very familiar with the shooting of this rifle, which seemed to shoot quite differently on the high mountain ranges from what it did in the tropical jungles of Malaya. I also obtained in Seattle a .33 Winchester and a .22 small bore for ptarmigan, grouse, etc.

Andy took me along to the store of Messrs. Brown & Hawkins and introduced me to Mr. Hawkins, who soon showed me round, and found everything that we wanted. He asked me if I had a good sleeping bag, and when I told him I had, he said, "That's a pity, because we have got a very fine sleeping bag which was made for a customer who did not take it up; it is one of the nicest bags I've seen. I should like to show it to you." It certainly was an excellent bag, made of young reindeer hide, lined with a very good quality of drill. I can tell you I coveted that bag. However, it seemed too much of an extravagance to buy another bag, the one I had obtained in Seattle being of the usual quality of khaki drill, padded with eiderdown. But Mr. Hawkins was willing to trade his bag for mine plus a consideration on my part, and presently I had his bag, and a great comfort it was, too.

Having made all our purchases, I arranged with Mr. Hawkins to send the goods down to the railway yard the following morning. Mr. Weir, the railway engineer, had arranged to put a "speeder" at my disposal, it being quite impossible for the train to get over the road for some days, owing to a bad wash-

out. The bridge at the fourth mile had gone altogether, and as a gang was working there, Mr. Weir had arranged that the "speeder" could take my goods up, and then, with the help of the bridge gang, I would be able to get them transferred across the gap where the bridge ought to have been. From there we could get along all right to Kenai Lake.

Andy intended taking Bill Kaiser with us as packer. He was in Seward at the time of my arrival, and as his ranch on Skilak Lake was our objective, it suited us both for Bill to come along from Seward. Next morning we arrived at the station yard, but unfortunately the "speeder" had had a breakdown, and after a good deal of speculation as to what was the matter with it, it was discovered that the connection in the magneto to the condenser had given out, and it was necessary to have this repaired before we could proceed.

However, although we could not get away that day or the next, we did finally depart on the morning of Saturday the 28th of September, were safely transported across the wash-out at the fourth mile, and soon commenced the climb to the pass, whose summit was at the twelfth mile. At the foot of the climb we had to abandon our trailer, which carried most of the goods, the "speeder" proceeding with its passengers only. Having arrived at the summit, the engineer returned for the trailer. It was very cold sitting on the car, and we were glad to get a fire going in the bunkhouse on the pass and warm our frozen extremities. The engineer soon returned with the "speeder", and we presently found ourselves racing down the other side of the pass at what appeared



to me to be a most frantic speed. I was soon told, however, that we were going very slowly compared to most trips; that the heavy load behind us on the trailer made it necessary for the engineer to take great precautions, which I was assured he was doing. I was glad to know that. There was a story of one engineer on the road who operated on one section who was reputed to have always two of his three "speeders" in the shop, and at least two men in the hospital!

We stopped at the eighteenth mile, where there was a caboose occupied by one of the timekeepers who was expecting the "speeder" up with provisions, and I think he was rather disgusted when he discovered that we had only got his mail. I heard afterwards—in fact, on my way back to Seattle—that a good deal of heart-burning was felt up the line when the "speeder" arrived without the provisions which were expected, but with a sportsman from goodness knows where, who had a whole truck-load of stores which he was taking on a hunting expedition. Well, you cannot please everybody, and it was not my fault. Blame the weather, to be just.

We stopped at the twentieth mile and there met W. L. Lodge, who had been engaged to join us as cook. Lodge had a ranch on the Snowy River, a stream which flows into Kenai Lake. Besides being a first-class cook, Lodge was also a hunter of no mean reputation, and was a great acquisition to our party.

Having unloaded our goods at the twentieth mile, we made our way back along the line a little way and then cut off into the bush towards Kenai Lake

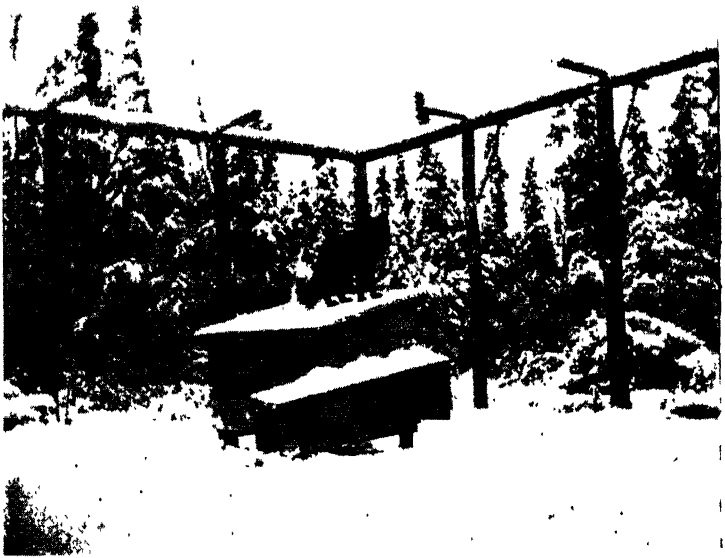
to Andy's cabin, where we were putting up for the night. We had been close to the lake for some way after we had reached the end of the down grade from the summit. We soon arrived at Andy's comfortable cabin, and it was not long before we had a good fire going and dinner on the way. Andy and the others went round with a boat to collect our goods, which had been left farther up the line, and I had an opportunity to look around and admire the scenery from the edge of the lake. Andy had very appropriately called his cabin "Lake View"—and a very striking view it was on that still September evening, the calm surface of the lake reflecting in soft shadows the distant spruce-clad hills on the far side of the water. Mrs. Revell, who lived close by, came in to cook for us while we stopped at Andy's cabin, and I cannot say that I ever tasted more dainty food. The late flood had done a good deal of damage to Andy's garden; in fact, his cabin had been flooded.

My companions soon came back with the loaded boat, and we started to get out what we would want for the night. After a most excellent dinner we soon turned in, hoping that the morrow would be an auspicious day for the real commencement of our journey. Andy had a very commodious inner room to his cabin, which he kindly placed at my disposal; and almost the first thing I noticed in front of the bed was what I thought was a bear-skin, but in actual fact it was only half a skin, and that what at first sight I had taken to be the length of the beast was only its breadth. Well, I thought, they certainly can grow some bears in this country. Afterwards Andy told me that it was half the skin of a brown bear that

he had killed some time previously, and was in no way an exceptionally big skin. The biggest skin that he had ever seen taken off a bear killed on an expedition he was with measured 12 feet long by 10 feet wide, but he had heard of even bigger ones!

The morning broke beautifully fine, and we were soon under way in Andy's boat. This boat was really on her trial trip for a long run, it having been built by Andy and Lodge during the last winter from timber whip-sawn by them. They were certainly expert boat-builders, the workmanship being really fine. Andy had fitted an Evinrude motor to it, and we spun away down the lake at about seven miles an hour. It did not take us long to cover the twenty-four miles to the landing at the mouth of the Kenai River.

As we neared the end of the lake the current began to show, and we soon found that we were rapidly entering the difficult part of the journey. We stopped at the landing for a few minutes, unshipped the motor, got out the sweeps, and then started down the Kenai River, a distance of about eighteen miles to the lower lake, called Skilak Lake, in which distance the river falls about 200 feet. There was fresh snow on the mountain-tops, and we hoped that the weather would hold for the next fifteen days or so, to give us a good chance of hunting sheep. With really bad weather it would be almost impossible to follow the sheep to the mountain-tops, and I was quite late enough in the season as it was. It took us about three hours to get down the Kenai River. Andy's boat behaved beautifully going through the rapids, and with the help of the skilful boatmen that I had with me, she only shipped water once; and that was going



BLACK FOX, "JACK", AT COTTONWOOD CREEK



through a canyon where we had waves considerably more than three feet high. It was "smoky" in the canyon, so Andy remarked. Lodge said that he had never seen it so bad. We landed just below and had a snack of lunch and rearranged the goods to see if any were wet. No damage was done. At the end of the river we reshipped the Evinrude and sped away across Skilak Lake towards Cottonwood Creek, where we were to make use of Bill Kaiser's cabin as our main base. We saw very few ducks going down the Kenai River, a few mergansers (sawbills), and a few butterballs, also some cormorants and gulls at the head of Skilak Lake. The salmon had finished their run. We saw two or three dreadful-looking specimens at their last gasp, swimming about near the mouth of the river. We arrived at Bill's cabin in good time, and I was soon introduced to his partner, Harry Lucas, better known as "Hank", who accompanied me on my hunting. A commodious and very comfortable cabin was soon disclosed, and our stores being transported from the boat to the house, we soon began discussing our future movements. This ranch had been in existence for some years, and was where Marshall Scull had landed on his trip in 1913. For three or four years Bill Kaiser and Hank Lucas had been engaged in breeding foxes as a commercial proposition, and from the good stock that they now had to show, there appeared every chance of the business being quite successful. One very beautiful black fox, which was the least wild of them all, and whom Bill called "Jack", condescended to let me take his photograph from inside his pen.

The next morning, the 30th of September, we

made a start for the sheep country. It was not possible for us to take all the necessary stores, tents, etc., with us in one trip; so it was decided to take as much as possible and cache it about half-way, come back for the night to the cabin, and get forward with the rest of the stuff the next day. From Cottonwood Creek the track we followed soon started to climb, and it was quite warm work; so much so, that my companions, who were all carrying heavy loads, shed most of their clothes before we had got half-way up the hill. We were making for a pass almost directly at the back of Bill's cabin, which was about 2000 feet above sea-level. On the way up we came across one of the holes which bull moose dig during the rutting season, and the smell from the urine with which they saturate these holes was very strong. The tracks were fresh, and were the first moose tracks that I had ever seen. It was all intensely interesting to me. Of course we had no intention of attempting to do any hunting until we had completed our transport arrangements; in fact, we did not intend to go after moose in this vicinity at all, Andy wishing me to hunt sheep first, and then later on to go into the lower country, where moose were much more plentiful, and where we hoped to get a chance at something really good.

When we arrived at the top of the hill there was a dense mist, and we were unable to see anything in the way of game. It was misty all the way to the small lake, where we cached our stuff and then returned. The fog was so dense on the way back that it was with some difficulty that we kept to the trail. I found walking over the comparatively flat ground above the

pass difficult, owing to the thick cushion made by the mossberry shrub, and being loaded up with heavy shoepacks, which were a new experience to me, as well as a good many more clothes than I had been accustomed to wear for years (in the Tropics one wears as little as possible), I was quite ready to rest when I got back to the cabin in the evening. But the first day out of camp is always a bad one.

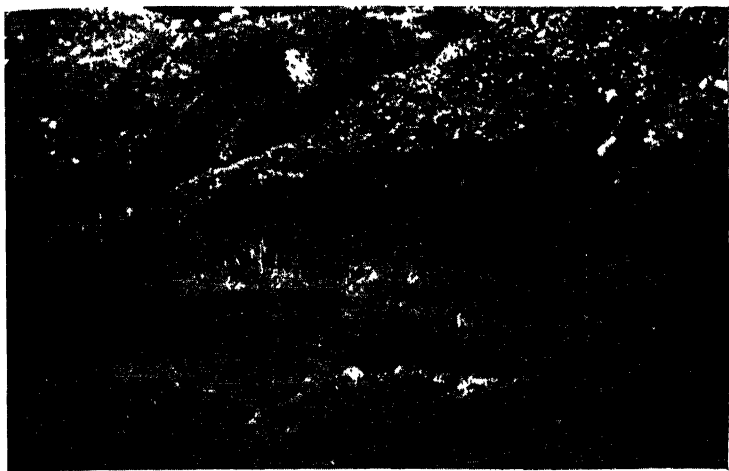
Next day we took up the balance of the stores, and soon after topping the rise of the pass (it was a beautiful day), Andy said, "I see a moose"—and, sure enough, after looking for some time through my glasses I spotted the first wild moose I had ever seen. It was a long way off, and amongst some thick shrub, but it was a moose all right.

We soon made the cache and then sorted out what we wanted for the night and the morrow, and continued our journey towards the Killey River. On the way we saw a black fox and a small black bear, the latter high up on the mountain. The view as the Killey River Valley opened out was magnificent. We were looking over a high gorge—in some places half a mile wide, in some probably two miles wide—and far away at the bottom, at least 2000 feet below us, we could see the silken thread of the river twisting and turning in its never-ending journey to the sea. Andy intended taking me up Benjamin Creek, a tributary of the Killey, where he hoped to find some good rams. He knew the country thoroughly, and considered that where he intended to go was probably the best and most likely ground in which to find the big rams. We were quite late enough in the season as it was, and the weather might break any time and



make it practically impossible to hunt high up on the mountains; so it was very necessary, if I wanted to get my full complement of sheep, to waste no time in finding the best country.

About mid-day we entered the Benjamin Creek Valley, and with my glasses I spotted three moose lying on the opposite side of the gorge, about a mile away. We camped at about 6 P.M. on the site of an old cabin, and I was asleep almost as soon as my head touched the pillow. Well, we were in the sheep country now, although we had not seen any yet; but had great hopes that the morrow would prove successful. Andy pointed out to me where one branch of the creek turned up into the mountains, and said that at the head of that branch was a large basin, an almost certain find for sheep, and to that basin we hoped to go next day.



BLACK BEAR, KILLEY VALLEY



## CHAPTER III

### STALKING THE WONDERFUL WHITE SHEEP OF ALASKA

Let us probe the silent places, let us see what luck betide us;

Let us journey to a lonely land I know.

There's a whisper on the night wind, there's a star agleam to guide us,  
And the wild is calling, calling . . . let us go.

R. W. SERVICE.

It rained a good deal during the night, but as I was very comfortable inside my sleeping bag, on a most luxurious couch of spruce boughs, and with my small silk tent quite waterproof, I slept steadily without knowing anything about it until the morning. It was a dull morning, and while we were having breakfast, Hank went a little way from camp and came back and asked me if I wanted to see a cow moose, there being one quite close to the camp. I jumped up, and soon saw quite close to the back of my tent a big cow moose walking about on the side of a small hill, appearing very much as if she had lost something. In fact, that's just what she had done, I think, for presently she started up the hill uttering a plaintive call, hoping, no doubt, to ascertain the whereabouts of the bull who had probably given her the slip for something more attractive. The call of the cow moose is very similar to the call of the water buffalo of India

—a very small sound for a big animal. But it can be heard a long way, especially by an amorous bull on the warpath. The call of the cow moose is generally used by the hunters who want to call up a bull. Andy was very clever at imitating the call, and although I did not wish to utilise such a method to enable me to bag a bull, I was extremely interested in watching the skill with which he could exercise the art.

But more anon about the calling of the moose—we have come here to hunt sheep. As our track took us across the creek, which was in flood, due to the night's rain, Andy and Lodge went off to make a rough bridge to enable us to reach the other side, and Hank prepared to go back to the cache to bring along the rest of the stores. I went up a rise at the back of the camp to have a look around.

I soon spotted two moose across the creek in some thick spruce—a nice bull and a cow. I feasted my eyes on the bull for a long time. It appeared to me to have an enormous head, which I could see very plainly through my glasses. Hank came along presently on his way to the cache, and I pointed the bull out to him. He had a look at it through my glasses, and said it wasn't a very big one. Hank went on his way and I went back to the camp a little wiser regarding moose. Andy returned shortly, saying the bridge was ready, so we started off on my first day after sheep. It was the 2nd of October, and I had left my home in the Malay States on the 2nd of August—exactly two months' journey to reach the spot where I was to commence my hunting.

The rain soon came on again, and climbing the mountains across the creek was pretty stiff work. Up,

up we went, it gradually getting colder, until the rain turned into sleet, and the sleet into snow. A nasty cold wind was blowing, too, which made it difficult to use our glasses.

"A very mean day to hunt sheep on", said Andy, and I quite agreed with him, except that I should have said, "to hunt anything".

In front of our camp on Benjamin Creek there was a fairly high mountain—probably between 4000 and 5000 feet above sea-level—and we made to the north of this. Below this mountain was the basin which Andy wished to visit, but devil a sheep did we see, or even any signs of them, so we skirted right around the mountain and came back on the south side of it, getting back to camp late in the afternoon.

Andy was disappointed that we had seen no sheep, but said that on such a day the sheep, if there were any on that side, would have been sheltering from the blizzard, and it was very unlikely that we would have come across them. He also said that in view of the late heavy storms it was probable that most of the sheep had gone over to Killey Valley, which was more sheltered from the north winds.

So the following morning we moved camp over to the Killey Valley, and a very beautiful morning it was, too. We followed the track that we had come back to camp by on the previous evening and then, crossing a fairly high plateau, commenced to skirt a steep hill-side which took us into the valley of the Killey. We got a magnificent view up the valley, and as more and more of the gorge opened out, we were able to spy over quite a large area of ground.

Presently we spotted the tell-tale white specks, which our glasses soon showed were sheep.

Altogether we saw about eighty sheep on both sides of the valley, mostly ewes and lambs, but we spotted a nice band of rams lying on a stone shoot below us, and although in a very awkward position for a stalk, we hoped for the best. Unfortunately, while we were still about 500 yards away, a bunch of ewes and lambs came up close to us, saw us and rushed off, alarming the others, who soon made their way up the mountain-side.

About 1000 feet above the bed of the Killey there was a small draw<sup>1</sup> where there were a few cottonwood trees far above the ordinary timber line. There was a large granite boulder in this draw which had, at some time or other, taken Lodge's fancy as a perfect spot in which to make a camp. Well, we made this spot, and Lodge had his wish, and camped alongside the boulder. We had been travelling light and had brought no tent with us, so just "siwashed" it under the shelter of this boulder. We made a very nice comfortable camp, and with sheep in the vicinity, we felt that something ought to happen on the morrow.

The next morning Hank and Lodge went back to Benjamin Creek to fetch the rest of the outfit, and Andy and I went up the mountain after sheep. We soon saw two bands of sheep, but they were all small ones. A little farther on we spotted three sheep right up on the top of a pass which would lead us back again into the Benjamin Creek Valley. One of these three appeared good enough—they were three rams

<sup>1</sup> A small gully or valley generally with a little level grass sward in it.

—and so we commenced a long stalk to try and circumvent them. When we last saw them they were feeding on a bench just above a steep stone slope, there being quite a lot of snow about where the sheep were. We had to make a long detour and soon lost sight of them, the contour of the ground shutting them out from view. What we had to keep in mind was the particular bench on which we had last seen them; and considering that we had to make tracks right away from the direct route towards the sheep, this was rather a difficult business. However, Andy being a master of his art, we made no mistake, and in about two hours from the commencement of the stalk found ourselves crawling up the slope, at the top of which we hoped we should find our game.

We had to go very cautiously because the slope was steep and the stones were loose; but at last when near the top, and I was a little in front, I spotted the tops of two horns just showing over the boulders on the edge of the bench. The approach was bad, in fact it was impossible just at that spot, so I backed down a little and then commenced to crawl up inch by inch towards the top of the slope. When about fifty yards from the rim I saw another pair of horns, which looked much bigger than the previous ones, and almost instantly the owner of these horns, who had been lying down, rose to his feet and looked over the rim at the extraordinary apparition crawling up the slope. I knew that I had only a fraction of time to take my shot, because the ram had only to move back a few inches to be out of sight, so hastily straightening myself up on to my knees, I drew a quick bead on his chest and fired. In an instant the ram had gone,



and I rushed up the slope as hard as I could to find myself on a flat bench, mostly covered with snow, and three sheep running away from me, now about 100 yards off. A hasty glance showed me the biggest of the three, the one I had wounded, and as he was almost out of sight behind a rise in the ground, I gave him my second barrel and broke his hind leg. Down amongst some boulders he bounded, his broken hind leg seeming to inconvenience him not at all; I soon temporarily lost sight of him, but, rushing across the snow, saw him fifty yards away just commencing to scrape away some snow preparatory to lying down. By this time I was fairly out of breath. We were high up on the mountain, and the rarefied air in lungs which had been accustomed to breathe the steam of the tropics for years was having its effect.

Well, to cut a long story short, we finally bagged the sheep all right, but after a long stern chase, and some very bad shooting on my part. Try as I would, I could not hold my sight on the beast, and as all the shots I had were stern shots, I was all the time afraid that I should hit his horns, and so kept on shooting behind him. Andy urged me to shoot, because he was afraid that the beast might get in amongst some of the big boulders where we might lose him, and so long as he was in sight it was advisable to try and bag him. As a matter of fact, had I never fired another shot after my first one, which had taken him a little to one side of the centre of the breast and a trifle low, he would probably have lain down, stiffened up, and then being unable to move, quietly died; but it is easy to be wise after the event, and I did not know that my first shot, which was taken very hurriedly,

BENJAMIN CREEK





might not have been merely a flesh wound. When I dashed up to the top of the bench, one of the smaller rams, seeing the wounded one behind a little, came running back to see what was the matter, and I had a beautiful view of him, standing for a few seconds looking about here and there, alert as all wild animals are, but confused with the noise and disturbance to his mid-day nap.

The dead sheep fell in a small creek, but in running away had obligingly made towards our camp, having run downhill about 500 feet, and so saved us some distance on our return journey.

The *Ovis dalli* of the Kenai Peninsula is a very beautiful beast, being pure white in colour, and as we were fairly late in the season, their coats were in splendid condition. This, the first wild sheep I had ever shot, proved to be a seven-year-old ram, with a nice, although light, pair of horns. The horns measured 31 inches in length, with a basal circumference of  $12\frac{3}{4}$  inches, and a spread of 21 inches between the tips.

Andy soon had the cape off, taking a very low cut so as to enable the head when set up to show the bulge of the shoulder, and with a heavy load on his back he and I commenced the descent to the camp.

That night we enjoyed some of the finest mutton chops you can imagine. Lodge, who returned to camp from Benjamin Creek about the same time as we arrived, excelled himself in preparing a most appetising meal.

The following morning, the 5th of October, was a beautiful day, and as Andy thought that it would be as well to pack in the sheep's head to Benjamin Creek

turned cold, and we had for the first time several degrees of frost during the night. We made a hasty breakfast in the snow, and then, deciding that the camp was untenable, Andy said that we had better move down the valley to Steve's old cabin on the Killey. This we did, arriving there about ten o'clock. As there was still stuff to bring up from the base, and Hank, who had gone right back to Cottonwood Creek with the sheep's head and cape, was somewhere on the journey back, Lodge went back to Benjamin Creek to bring up some of the stuff with him.

The storm cleared up about mid-day, and we were able to take a look round. On a stone slope about 1000 feet above us we made out a small black bear. Andy said we might go up and try and have a look at him, so we proceeded to do so. We got fairly close to him, and then had to make a detour around a steep bluff, and in doing so lost sight of him for a few minutes. When we again arrived at a spot where we should have been very nearly in a shooting position, we could see no signs of him at all; nor when we climbed a little higher did we manage to locate him. A treacherous slant of wind had evidently reached him, and the mountain-side being covered with enormous boulders which formed endless caverns, he no doubt bolted into some spot very secure from his would-be hunters. Well, as we were so far up the mountain, and it was a comparatively fine afternoon, Andy thought that we might just as well carry on to the top and have a good spy for sheep. So up we went, and the higher up we went the more we felt the wind, until at last, when we were almost on the top, and had to pass up a stone shoot which would take

us out on to a grass basin, it was found that only the slightest effort was required to get up the shoot, the wind behind us doing the rest. In fact, as the shoot narrowed towards the top, the wind was so strong I pictured myself being finally shot out of the narrow end of the funnel like the celebrated sparrow out of the water-spout; but I am glad to say I just managed to avoid such an ignominious exit from the side of the mountain.

We now found ourselves in a very nice sheltered basin covered with short grass, evidently (from the signs about) a favourite feeding place for sheep. But there were none here now, so following along a slight draw we made for a point from which we could examine the surrounding country. Soon we spotted, far across the valley of a tributary of the Killey, two sheep. Andy examined them for a long time with his glasses, and decided that they were really good rams, both of which carried heads worthy of bagging. But it was quite impossible to make a direct advance in their direction—the ground was unsuitable and the wind all wrong—so we skirted up a small valley which ran at right angles to the direction the sheep were in. They were on a gentle slope which commanded a very large angle of vision, and, provided they remained where they were, it would probably be impossible for us to successfully stalk them. But as we had to make a very long detour—I reckon that in a direct line the sheep were about a mile and a half from us, and the way we intended to go would take us right round the bend of the valley, a distance of about five miles—and it was now past two o'clock in the afternoon, Andy thought that the chances

were very strong that by the time we got anywhere near the sheep they would have moved off the slope they were on, and might be feeding in some more accessible spot.

Going up the small valley, we soon spotted a large band of ewes and lambs, which also spotted us, but did not take much notice of us ; and presently, being joined by another band, they all moved very slowly up the side of the mountain, and as we passed some 500 feet below them, they all bunched up together and watched us out of sight. There must have been at least forty of them, but not a ram amongst them.

On we went, and when we had reached the head of the little valley we were following, Andy thought it was time to turn, and almost at once we found ourselves walking right in the teeth of the wind. It had been behind us so far, and we had been somewhat sheltered by the sides of the valley we were following, but now we fairly caught it. It was almost impossible to use one's glasses, the lenses becoming covered with sleet in a few seconds. Unfortunately, we now discovered that between us and where we hoped to find the two rams there was a band of about nine rams lying down, and it was quite impossible to circumvent them. We looked at them very carefully, but there was not a shootable head amongst them. Now, what was to be done? The afternoon was getting on, and if we waited until those small sheep moved off, it would probably be too late to stalk the two we were after. If we showed ourselves, they would probably run straight away from us right up to the two old rams. However, the fates were kind to us this stormy day, for presently the nine rams, who I think must



RAM SHOT NEAR GLACIER, KILLEY VALLEY,  
ON 11TH OCTOBER



*OVIS DALLI*—OLD RAM SHOT IN THE KILLEY  
VALLEY ON 6TH OCTOBER





have seen us for a second or two, started at a brisk walk straight up the hill away from the direction that we wanted to proceed in. When they were well out of the way (they had disappeared over the mountain-top) we moved on. When about a mile away from where the rams had been, we spotted them again, feeding down the slope they had been lying on, and presently we saw them disappear into a small draw. Now was our chance, so getting along as quickly as we could in face of a pretty severe blizzard, we soon found ourselves below a ridge, on the other side of which we believed the rams were feeding. Andy said that he was sure they were both good heads, and advised me that if I had the chance I should have a "crack" at them both.

The other side of the ridge that we were now on was very near to the mouth of the draw where we thought the sheep would be, so I crept round to the tail of the ridge, and moving my head by fractions of an inch at a time, I looked around into the draw. Yes, sure enough, there were two sheep feeding with their sterns towards me about 150 yards away. I crept back to Andy and suggested that if we moved up our side of the ridge about seventy yards and then crept up to the top (it was only a very short distance), we would be able to see the sheep directly below us, and probably within thirty or forty yards.

This we proceeded to do, but just as we were very near the top, and commanded a view of the opposite side of the draw, although not yet high enough to see into the draw, we saw two magnificent rams walking up the slope, going away from us. We were amongst stones and loose shale, and I was not ready to take a

steady shot. I was just contemplating what was the best thing to do, when the two rams made a half-turn and lay down. They were absolutely unconscious of our presence, and as we had not moved, we were able to snuggle close to the ground and examine them. They both had fine heads and I hoped to "crack" them both, as Andy had suggested. The sheep were under 100 yards away from us, and although lying down, were in a fine position to fire at. All the time a very stiff wind was blowing directly in our faces. I very carefully took off my cap, intending to place it under my rifle, as I had nothing in front of me on which to rest it except sharp stones. Unfortunately, as I pushed my soft cap in front to get it under my rifle, a vicious gust of wind caught the edge of it and blew one side of it up over my hand. The sheep instantly spotted this unlooked-for movement, and before one could count three had scrambled to their feet and turned to go. Ten yards and they were out of sight over the edge of the far ridge, but not before I had managed to place a bullet rather low down in the hindmost of the rams and a second bullet somewhere into the hill-side, which bullet was intended for the second ram. We dashed down the slope, up the other side, and soon saw ram number one slowly walking straight away from us about 100 yards away. I fired again and hit him in the back and down he went; but try as we would we could not see any signs of ram number two. We were amongst very broken ground, and it was very easy for him to be out of sight although still within good shooting range. That gust of wind had cost me the second ram, because had I been able to take a steady shot at the first ram, the

second would certainly have jumped to his feet and stood for a moment, which would have given me time to have a "crack" at him. However the list of "ifs" and "buts" in big game shooting is long, and I expect the patience of my readers is getting short, so we will leave it at that.

The ram I had just bagged was a really good one for this part of the country, but unfortunately the tips of both horns were badly worn. The least worn horn was 34 inches long, and would have been 40 inches had it been perfect. They measured 14 inches in circumference at the base, which Andy said was good. The span between the tips was 19 inches.

He was a big, heavy beast—as big a ram as he had ever seen, Andy said. His teeth were much worn, and, according to the rings on his horns, he must have been ten years old at the least.

We got back to camp just at dark and found Lodge and Hank had returned. Lodge was very pleased with my new head, and when I said that as I had only one more sheep to get, I wanted to bag one even better than this one, he shook his head and said, "Well, you'll have a job to do that, anyway".

Again we had a bad storm during the night, and the river was in spate the next morning. While we were having breakfast, a bull moose came and looked at us from the other side of the river; but before I could get my camera ready and get close enough to take a picture, he had moved off. He remained for some time in the spruce forest opposite our cabin. Curiosity, I suppose, made him hang about in our vicinity.

We busied ourselves in preparing the sheep's scalp, and cleaned up the skull preparatory to sending it back by Hank to Cottonwood Creek.

The following day, the storm having subsided, Andy and I again went up the mountain at the back of the cabin to look for sheep. The weather was very uncertain and, being so late in the season, might break up at any time, so it was very necessary for me to try and get my third sheep as soon as possible.

There was much snow on the heights, and through this snow we plodded along. While going along the side of one of the mountain spurs we saw, some 200 yards away from us, a very fine specimen of a cross fox. It was busy scratching up the snow, and did not see us at first. Presently it spotted us and started leisurely to trot along parallel to us on the far side of a small creek. Then we lost sight of it as it disappeared into the draw below us, and we were just commencing to move off when it appeared coming up our side of the slope, heading straight in our direction. We remained stock-still, and that fox actually came up to within nine measured paces of where we were standing, and then stopped and had a good look at us. My camera was unfortunately in Andy's pack, and it was impossible to get it out now, although had we thought for a moment that the fox would come towards us, we would have had ample time to get ready; and so we lost an almost unique opportunity of photographing a wild fox on the snow. There was absolutely no cover whatsoever. We were standing straight up on a virgin bed of snow, and the fox deliberately came from about 200 yards to see what we looked like at close quarters. He was in beautiful

coat, with black stockings on all four legs, and the usual brown-grey coat of a cross fox. As he passed us, still going quite slowly, he got our wind and then soon disappeared at a good slinging canter. Andy said that he had never seen such a thing before; but when we got back to Cottonwood Creek and told Bill Kaiser about it, he said that he had been told by the Indians that when the first good fall of snow comes after the summer, the foxes are so pleased that, for a few days, they become almost indifferent to the sight of man, and one can approach them very easily.

We saw altogether five foxes on this day—one a fine specimen of black fox and one a very beautiful bright red one. We were passing near the carcass of the sheep I had killed two days before, and they were after what had been left.

Shortly after we had been visited by the cross fox Andy spotted a solitary ram some two miles away on a mountain-side. It looked a big beast, so we attempted a stalk. After getting within about half a mile of where we had seen the ram we saw that there were seven of them; the one we had first seen was the biggest of the bunch, and would have made a fine trophy. Unfortunately, it was absolutely impossible for us to get a yard nearer, the ground being very unfavourable. They were lying on a steep slope, and any advance we made must have divulged our position to them, so we had to wait in the hope that they would move farther down the slope to feed later on, and give us a chance of approaching to within a reasonable shooting distance.

We were standing in about six inches of snow, and it was cold on that mountain-side. Well, we walked

about for four solid hours, waiting for those sheep to move. It was much too cold to keep still, and there was no shelter anywhere within a reasonable distance. At last, with a sigh of relief, Andy came back from a spy-hole that we had located between some rocks, and said that the sheep had got up and were moving down towards the draw below us. It was now late in the afternoon, and we had not much time to lose if we wanted to get back to the cabin that night. We crawled through the snow towards the sheep, but, unfortunately, when about 300 to 400 yards from them, found a fault in the ground, and were unable to proceed any nearer. I was for waiting, but Andy was against it, and we were both pretty nearly frozen, so, waiting until the big ram was broadside on, I put up the 300-yard sight, and, aiming well over the beast's back, just missed his tail. I had not allowed enough for a stiff cross wind that was blowing. He started forward and stopped for an instant; and, my sights still covering him, I pulled the trigger, to be answered by—nothing—a miss-fire. Before I could reload the sheep were off at full speed up the mountain. We returned, I at any rate feeling a bit sore, and on our way to camp passed the dead ram of two days ago and collected some more of the meat. As we approached the ram there was a fine cross fox rolling about in the snow close to the carcass, rubbing himself along the snow and thoroughly enjoying himself. We got to within thirty or forty yards of him before he spotted us.

We got back to camp at about six o'clock, in good time for our evening meal.

The next day we went up the river again and

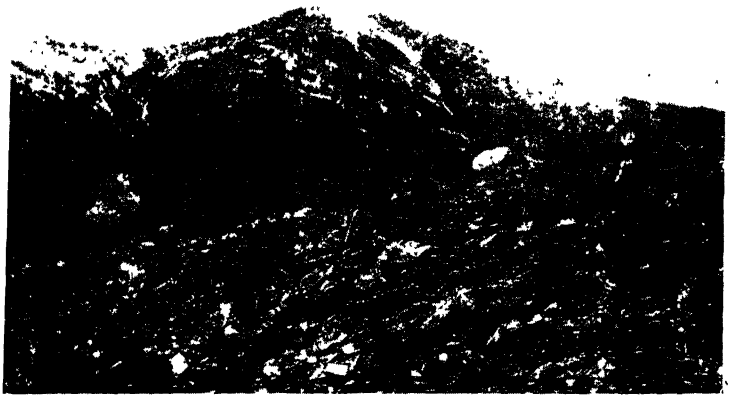
were unsuccessful, being unable to locate anything worth shooting; but we had quite an exciting adventure in crossing a steep snow slope on which the snow had been partly thawed and then re-frozen. The surface of the hill-side was covered with large, round stones, which were mostly coated with ice, and we really had a difficult time negotiating that slope. A slip, and we would have gone to kingdom-come on the rocks 500 feet below us. We kept up our spirits while we were in the worst places by reminding each other of the "mulligan" stew which would be waiting for us in camp when we got back. Lodge was an artist at making a stew, and as we had plenty of sheep meat, we mostly had that fare in the evening. The steep slope that we had to negotiate reminded Andy of a yarn about a prospector who apparently came to the same sort of place, but at the bottom, instead of there being a gorge, his camp was located on a level bench. He conceived the brilliant idea, as he viewed his camp far below him, that he might avoid the long tramp home if he tobogganed down the slope, using his shovel to sit upon. This he proceeded to do, and arrived in camp almost before he knew he had started. But he had overlooked the result of the friction on his shovel, and when he arrived the shovel was nearly red-hot and he was minus the seat of his breeches. He was laid up for weeks.

The following day, although we had no luck with sheep, proved to be full of interest concerning black bears.

On our way up the Killey Valley we saw a black bear grubbing about amongst the rocks in search of berries. We examined him carefully through our



glasses, and decided that he was not more than a three-year-old bear, so I did not wish to shoot him. I suggested to Andy, however, that we might be able to photograph him, and Andy, full of enthusiasm, commenced a careful stalk. We got within about 100 yards of the bear when I commenced the final approach by myself, the bear being in a draw on the opposite side of the slope on which I was stalking. I reached the top of the slope, and there, sure enough, was the bear some thirty yards below me, but it was more or less hidden amongst the bushes, and although it did not present a very good mark, I exposed two films on him before he shambled away. Turning round I noticed Hank Lucas, who had taken up a commanding position on some rocks above us, pointing to the gully into which the bear had disappeared, and with a circular wave of his arm, indicating that the bear had gone up the gully and was circling round towards us. We approached the next slight rise, and presently saw the bear on the opposite slope to us, standing quite clear of all the berry bushes, and gazing intently in our direction. I got off a film as quickly as I could, expecting the bear to bolt at any moment; but never a bolt was in him at that time, he wanted to see what we looked like, and had determined to have a good inspection. He sat down, licked his chops, yawned, and seemed in no hurry to move on. This gave me several fine opportunities to record photographs of him. Finally he came down the slope on the opposite side of the draw and commenced to feed on the berries that covered the bottom of the gully. When he started to come down he grumbled at us a good deal, and stamped his forefeet on the ground.



BLACK BEAR, KILLEY VALLEY



We were evidently in the midst of his favourite patch of berries. Finally he got our wind, and then made best time over the rocks and through the swamps to get away from what at last he realised were his hated enemies. We must have been within twenty-five yards of the bear at one time, with absolutely nothing between us and him; and towards the end, after I had exposed as many films as I required, we were talking to him and making inquiries after his family without in any way disturbing him in the least.

That day we also saw many more black bears, which abound in the Killey Valley. During our search after sheep we came across several females; and on every occasion when they were accompanied by cubs they had three with them—from their size obviously of the same litter. With such prolific breeding no wonder the black bear is numerous in this corner of Alaska.

We were now beginning to get a little anxious. The weather was none too certain, although the gods had been very kind to us so far, and Andy proposed that we should go right up the head of the valley to the glacier from which Killey River commenced, and try in a basin he knew of, which he felt sure would hold sheep. So, on the 11th of October Andy and I went on ahead, and Lodge and Hank were to follow behind with a light camp outfit, as it would be impossible for us to go right up to the end of the valley and back the same night to Steve's cabin. We arranged where they should make a camp, and hoped to be able to get back to it before dark.

We saw no signs of sheep until we were a good many miles away from our camp, and then the tracks

in the snow showed that what sheep had passed that way had gone up towards the glacier. We had a long tramp, and about four o'clock in the afternoon we were getting close to the basin where Andy expected to find them, when we struck quite fresh tracks of a large band which had passed quite recently. One small basin, which looked a very likely place in which to find sheep, was blank, but shortly afterwards Andy, spying down towards the foot of the glacier, said, "I spy a large band of big rams", and, sure enough, there they were. We counted twelve of them, and there were some fine heads amongst them. Farther over, on the slope of the mountain, we could discern a band of ewes and lambs, but although we would be in full view of them when we started to stalk the rams, they were a long way off, and would probably take no notice of us.

Andy made a very clever stalk. The wind was directly from the rams to us, but Andy was suspicious of two or three draws that lay between us and the rams, so made a long detour below them, and then we came up a draw which brought us close to them. By this time they had all disappeared into a little grassy basin just the other side of where we were, and, unfortunately, we had to cross a sheet of snow before we could possibly locate them. We were close to them, probably within 200 yards of the nearest, and although we could see nothing, and they could see nothing, it was risky work getting across that patch of snow. However, we managed it without stampeding the sheep, and started to crawl up a slight slope covered with stones and a little snow.

When quite near the top I spotted the head and

horns of a ram to my right feeding in the gully below us, but he was only about a five-year-old, so we moved along a bit to avoid him and continued our crawl. When within a few yards of the top of the knoll a wretched ewe came into our line of vision feeding directly towards us, but still on the other side of the slope. We hugged the ground and made ourselves as small as possible, but she still came on, entirely unsuspecting of our presence. When within twenty yards of where I was lying, and when I was just contemplating jumping up and running in and trying to pick out the best ram I could see, she turned off, and after feeding parallel to us for a few yards, turned her tail towards us and commenced feeding down the slope. I was never so pleased in my life to see a beast's tail as I was to see the tail of that ewe.

Crawling on again for a few yards, I soon saw several rams feeding within 100 yards of me. I carefully looked them over and decided that one standing feeding alongside a small bush, broadside on to me, had the best head, and it seemed certain that he would drop where he was. There were other rams below me, but I could not see them without disclosing myself to those directly in front, and anyway the one I had selected seemed good enough for me. I had a perfect rest for my rifle on a little hummock of grass, but I was surrounded by snow. Taking a very careful aim (I had heaps of time), I fired, and clean missed him. Instantly there was a rush below me. I jumped to my feet and saw rams everywhere running in all directions. Going straight away from me were two fine rams, but getting on for 200 yards away. Firing at what looked the biggest, I broke his hind

leg. Firing again, I missed him, but yet again I hit him just to one side of his backbone, the bullet raking forward into his chest. However, he still held on, and running after him through deep snow I very soon had "bellows to mend"; and as there was a heavy blood trail, and Andy had the advantage of me by about twelve years, I told him to try and keep the beast in sight, and, if necessary, finish him off.

I plodded along some way in the rear and soon came up to Andy, who was now quite out of breath himself, trying to hit the ram, who was up on top of a deep snow slope, very sick indeed. We approached quite close to the beast, and presently he tottered and came rolling down the slope right to our feet. He was still alive, however, so Andy slipped his hunting knife in under his ribs and his troubles were finished. He was a fine nine-year-old ram, with a width between the tips of his horns of 20 inches, a basal circumference of  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and a length of 34 inches.

It was late, past five o'clock, and we had to make all haste in removing the head and cape and starting off on our return journey. On the way back we had a look at where I had so ignominiously missed the ram. I can only conclude that the reflection of the snow on my foresight had made me take too thick a sight, and that I had fired over him. An easier shot at a sheep it would be difficult to imagine. We made for the Killey River, and followed along its banks towards camp.

When it was just about dusk and we were getting near where we hoped to find our companions, we saw, far up a grass glade, a bull moose. He was quite 400 yards away from us. Andy stopped and said he would call him up, and commenced calling, using his hands

only as a trumpet, imitating the call of the cow moose. The old bull soon picked up the sound and commenced coming down the glade directly towards us. On, on he came, looming ever bigger and bigger in the fast fading twilight. He came very close to us—too close I thought—we were standing right in the open—and I got my rifle ready. But when he stopped Andy whispered to me that he would now circle around to test the wind, and as soon as he got our wind would clear off instantly. This he commenced to do; of course, he could see us perfectly well, and presently, as he got the hated odour, up went the bristles of his neck, around he wheeled, and off he went at a long, swinging trot up the glade he had just come down. He was pretty scared, the beautiful cow of his anticipation having turned out to be two very evil-smelling things that stood on two legs, and we watched him for a long time disappearing in the direction where we imagined our camp was. He had a fair head, but not worth shooting. Now this old moose had still something else to scare him, as we found out later on. He apparently made directly to where Lodge and Hank had pitched camp, and then, discovering that he had foes both behind him and in front, started off straight up the mountain. Of course, that was bound to result in failure, and as his tracks showed us the following morning, he had arrived at a steep piece of flat rock, which he had tried to scramble up, failed, and then slipped down about fifty feet to a sheep track, where he had fortunately been able to pull himself up. Had he failed to stop on the sheep track he must have gone for good. He cut his leg pretty badly sliding down, there being quite



a small pool of blood where he had stopped in the track. Having arrived on the sheep trail, he had turned round and run back in the direction that he had seen us.

It was quite dark before we topped a rise from which we expected to see the glimmering light from our camp, but no light did we see. We shouted. No answer; but after some delay and many shouts we managed to make ourselves heard. Lodge showed a light, and we were soon comfortable in our little camp under the mountain. This completed my sheep hunting, so there was now nothing further to be done except get back to Cottonwood Creek and re-outfit for the moose country.

It took us two days to return to Cottonwood Creek, where we arrived about 3.30 on the afternoon of the 14th of October, having been in the sheep country for a couple of weeks, and having bagged three really nice sheep heads. On our way back on the 14th we struck a blizzard on the mountain just before we started to descend to Cottonwood Creek, and it was really cold, the wind going through and through one. In fact, we had just got out of the mountains in time, the weather breaking up for good the following day.

The three sheep heads looked very well placed in a row in front of Bill's cabin, and I felt that, even if I never got a moose at all, I had been well rewarded for my long journey. Although the climbing at times was fairly hard, I had thoroughly enjoyed my hunting after sheep. The stately mountains, the forbidding and relentless glaciers, the rushing torrents, will ever remain a dear memory to me of a never-to-be-forgotten trip after *Ovis dalli*.



MOOSE COUNTRY AND SHEEP MOUNTAINS, KENAI PENINSULA



## CHAPTER IV

### THE GIANT MOOSE (*ALCES GIGAS*) OF THE KENAI PENINSULA—CONCLUSION

Where the whistler shrills in triumph, and the big horn dreams in peace,  
Where the brown bear skulks to cover up where silence holds the lease;  
Where the land is as God left it, nor has known the tread of man,  
There's a treasure ledge awaiting—go and find it if you can.

PAT O'COTTER.

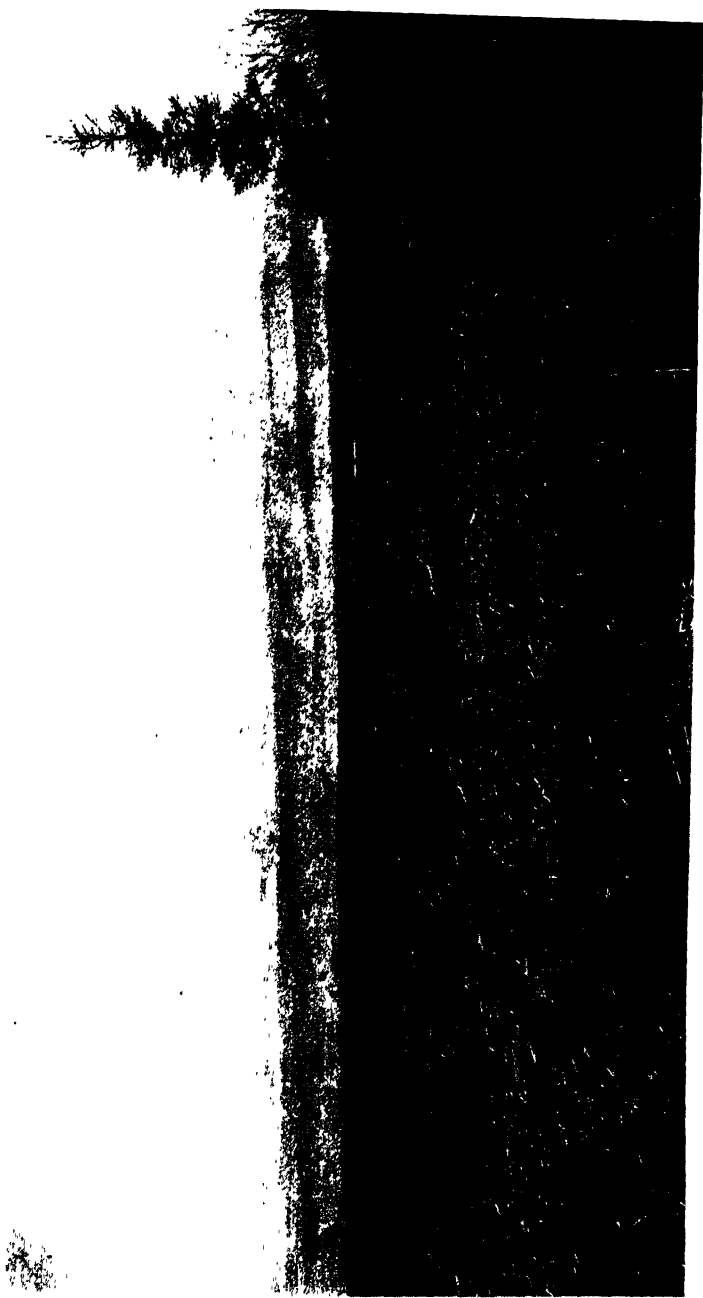
WE remained at Cottonwood Creek on the 15th of October, having a good clean-up preparatory to our trip after moose. The sheep capes were inspected and re-salted. They had kept in perfect condition and were drying out nicely. Lodge cooked a liberal supply of bread in Bill's large oven, and very good bread it was, too. It lasted us for some days while in the moose country.

The next morning we commenced our journey down Skilak Lake in Andy's boat, the Evinrude taking us along in fine style. Rather more than half our journey had been accomplished (it was a run of about eight miles in all) when we spied a large black bear on an island in the middle of the lake. It was a big island, and he was rooting about close to the beach, but disappeared into the spruce fringing the island before we were within half a

mile of where we had decided we would land. Hank and I went after him, but never saw a sign of him again.

It was still the right side of noon when we landed at King's County Creek, where Andy had a cache, and all our goods were soon safely ashore and the boat hauled up well above storm level. There being still plenty of time, it was decided to start on our tramp to the Funny River, the locality where Andy intended that I should hunt moose. There was a half-way camp on the Killey River, which had been used a few years before by a party whom Andy had guided; and to that camp we decided to go. Taking about half of our stores we were soon on "Moose Horn Trail", so called from the number of moose horns which were distributed along the track. It had been the custom of the guides in the Kenai Peninsula to collect any shed moose horn that they found close to the trail, and place it on a stump or log close alongside the track as a landmark. There were dozens of horns distributed along this track, and we added one or two to the collection while we were on our tramp.

We arrived at the Killey River in good time, and found an old flat-bottomed scow which had been used by Andy on a previous occasion, and which had been safely placed above flood level near the river bank. This we soon launched, transferred all our goods across the Killey, and cast about for a good camping place. The old camp had been on the wrong side of the river for us, as we wanted to commence hunting on the morrow between the Killey and Funny Rivers, so we had to select a fresh camp-



MOOSE COUNTRY AND SHEEP MOUNTAINS, KENAI PENINSULA



ing place. There were plenty of moose tracks about, but we did not see any of the beasts themselves. The following morning Lodge and Hank went back to King's County Creek to bring along the rest of the stores, and Andy and I commenced our first day's hunting after moose.

At the back of our camp was a high ridge running more or less in a line from the Killey River to the Funny River. Below this ridge, that is, downstream of it, there was a large extent of flat on which there was excellent feeding for moose, and to this ridge Andy wended his way. The moose in the Kenai Peninsula feed principally on the shoots of the dwarf willow, of which the place is very prolific. Whether they eat much grass or not I am unable to form an opinion, but I noticed several times that when I thought that some particular beast was eating grass—in fact it looked exactly as if they were grazing—on making a careful examination of the place we discovered that the beasts we had been watching had been eating the fine shoots of the dwarf willow which were just showing up through the ground. The "moose" country in the Kenai Peninsula, in which we now were, was devastated some forty years or so ago by a great forest fire, which cleared the country of the spruce and left it, no doubt, for some time a bare wilderness. The dwarf willow and the quaking aspen have grown up in place of the spruce. Although the spruce is still in evidence, it is too slow growing to be able to keep pace with the other two, and thus a fine browsing country was provided for the moose. There are still many large blocks of spruce which afford good shelter to the moose, but



they can frequently be found amongst the willow and the dead spruce trees, of which, of course, there are vast numbers.

Well, to return to our hunting: Andy took me up to the ridge at the back of our camp and then, continuing in a south-westerly direction, we skirted the ridge for a mile or so and approached the sky-line. Soon a vast panorama opened out before us—a great expanse of flat land covered with burnt timber, wind-falls, and occasional clumps of spruce. Presently we made out with our glasses several moose amongst the dead timber far below us, feeding on the succulent shoots of the dwarf willow with which the plain below us was covered. Altogether we made out about forty moose scattered over an area which would have been about four miles square. It was intensely interesting watching them through our glasses. Presently we saw at the far side of the picture the flash of two large horns and could just make out the form of a big bull moose coming in our direction at a great pace, every now and again crashing his antlers against the dead spruce trees that came in his way. It was the tail-end of the rutting season, and the bulls were still in good fighting trim, this old bull having evidently seen or scented some other moose which at the moment were invisible to us. But not for long—a careful scrutiny with our glasses disclosing a bunch of five or six moose, amongst which we could see a couple of good bulls. One of these went back towards the advancing bull, and we could see them sparring together, although not very clearly, and presently the new-comer turned round and became very busy on some willow shoots—a poor form of dissembling. It was perfectly

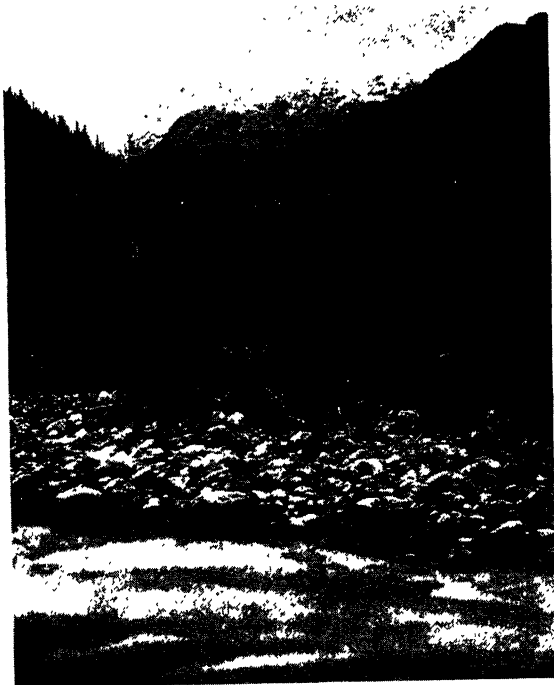
obvious what he had come for, but apparently he had got "cold feet".

Andy thought that the bull we had seen coming across the flat was worth investigating, and suggested a stalk, but we had to make a very long detour, and when we got down amongst the dead timber the landscape offered a very different aspect, so that it was difficult to locate where we had last seen the big bull. However, we knew that he was fairly close to a clump of spruce, and when we got close to this clump we tried to locate him. During our approach we had seen about a dozen moose within quite short distances of us, and I began to think that these moose were pretty confiding, and seemed to care for us not at all. Presently we made out the horns of a bull moose lying down, and soon located several, but although we had a good look over them all, there was not a decent head in view. One bull got up and faced us, evidently trying to make out what we were. He stood in clear view about fifty yards away, and seemed quite indifferent to our presence. Andy put the spread of his horns down at about forty-five inches, but the head was light, and anyway in the Kenai Peninsula a forty-five-inch head would be considered a poor trophy. We saw several more moose during the day, cows, calves, and quite a number of bulls, but nothing up to what we wanted. We approached quite close to two cows lying down, and both Andy and I took photographs. In the afternoon it rained a little and continued to do so during the night.

The next day we moved on toward Funny River, arriving at our camping site about mid-day. On the

way we saw about twenty moose, one or two good bulls, but nothing that appeared good enough to bother about. In the afternoon Andy and I crossed the Funny River and climbed the bluff on the opposite side of it, when we found ourselves on an undulating plain, cut up with small draws, the whole place being covered with moose tracks of all ages. We saw about twenty-five moose that afternoon, but again failed to locate a really good bull. There seemed to be any quantity of moose. In two days we had seen about a hundred, and probably none twice, and as yet we had only touched the fringe of the moose country. When we got back to camp in the evening we found that Hank had shot a two-year-old black bear, whose meat served to provide a very dainty morsel in our evening stew. I think of all the meat we had on the trip, there was nothing like the meat of this bear. Of course by this time we were all pretty fit and in fairly hard condition, which naturally generated a fine appetite; but anyway I think that young black bear meat would find a place high up on any epicure's menu.

That night it turned cold and we had several degrees of frost. The weather seemed more settled now, and the bite in the air the following morning was worth a long journey to enjoy. Lodge and Hank went back to Killey River to bring along the remaining stores, and Andy and I hunted between the Killey and Funny Rivers. Although we saw about fifty moose, of which at least half were bulls, we failed to locate any bull which appeared good enough to shoot. However I had a very enjoyable day watching moose at close quarters; and by this time it seemed



BENJAMIN CREEK





to me that when one did make up one's mind to take any particular beast, there would not be much difficulty in doing so. The real difficulty seemed to me to be able to judge accurately enough as to whether the beast one had in view was really the best that one was likely to have a chance of bagging. Again, there were so many moose that one might spot a bull some considerable distance off, which would appear through the glasses to be a worthy beast, but in attempting to stalk him one would have to circumvent or outwit other moose, which seemed to be in every valley. By the time one did get near the spot where one hoped to find one's prospective trophy, if one had been lucky enough to avoid scaring him by putting up some of the other moose, he might have moved off. Tracking was out of the question, the entire country being covered with spoor of all sizes and all ages.

That night we had the first really hard frost of the trip, the temperature going down to nearly zero. The following morning Andy, Hank, and I hunted down the river from camp and located what looked like a shootable bull at about half a mile distance. We made a long detour, and just when we were commencing to stalk him (he was on the edge of a small hill) he commenced to feed away from us and was lost to sight on the far side of it. We approached as quickly as we could, and as we came near to the top of the hill I saw the tops of his antlers moving through the fallen timber just below us. We remained stock-still, and when he was within about twelve yards of us he lay down. Very carefully we examined his antlers, and although he had a good spread and one horn was a

fine one, the other was a good deal crumpled, so we decided to try and photograph him instead of shooting him. I remained where I was with Hank, and Andy crept up the hill-side. I suppose he got a whiff of our wind; anyway he suddenly stood up and faced Andy, who had his camera ready. Unfortunately, there was a dead tree exactly between Andy and the moose, so that a really good photograph was impossible. Having posed for his photograph at a range of about thirty feet, he swung round and was away over the fallen timber at a wonderful pace for so big and heavy an animal.

On our way back to camp we saw many moose, but nothing striking in the way of a head. The beast that we had spared had undoubtedly a wide-spreading pair of horns; but they were very uneven, and I was anxious, if possible, to obtain a couple of really typical heads with good, even horns which had grown normally and not been twisted by some slight accident to them while in the velvet. Many of the very wide-spreading horns had nothing to recommend them except the spread, and that did not appeal to me as a trophy, although, of course, one hoped to be able to obtain a fine pair of horns, together with a wide spread. Such a combination, I gathered from Andy, was rare. We certainly saw between 100 and 200 full-grown bull moose while we were hunting in the Kenai Peninsula, but failed to locate a really first-class head which combined weight, symmetry, and wide spread.

The hard frost still continued, and the following morning we decided to hunt up river from camp, Hank accompanying Andy and myself. We were not



TOWING OUR BOAT UP THE KENAI RIVER



BULL MOOSE PHOTOGRAPHED ON KENAI PENINSULA





very far from camp when we spotted a fine bull on the top of a ridge well silhouetted against the sky-line. He appeared to carry heavy antlers, so we commenced to stalk him. He must have been nearly two miles away when we first saw him. Our stalking was very considerably hampered by a bunch of about twenty cow moose which became alarmed and would keep between us and our objective. We tried several detours, but always discovered some wretched cow in the way. Finally, when we had approached somewhere near the region in which we had spotted the big bull, he was nowhere to be seen; but on the same ridge we found a young bull quietly taking a siesta amongst the dwarf willows.

So we continued upstream, and presently were attracted by the discord raised by several ravens who were circling round, evidently upset about something. Andy suggested that there must be a carcass of something near by, and sure enough Hank presently found the remains of a bull moose, the greater portion of which had been devoured by a brown bear. The antlers spanned a little over fifty inches. The bear had probably come across a bull injured in fighting, and had finished him off. The carcass had been dragged down a slight slope for some distance, and the bear had made the greater portion of his meal close alongside a small lake, which was now frozen over hard. There were several beds excavated out of the ground right alongside the remains of the moose, and Andy informed me that the habit of the brown bear when undisturbed was to camp beside his victim, and, I conclude, spend the day eating and sleeping alternately. There were many signs of brown

bear in the vicinity, and we hoped that we might have the luck to run across one.

On we went up the valley which was here much broken up into gullies and ridges, undoubtedly ancient glacier formations. We spotted some moose about 200 yards away, but the bull with the three cows we saw was only a very moderate one; and we were just commencing to move off in another direction when Hank said he heard the crashing of a bull's antlers on the same ridge as the moose we had just inspected, but some distance away. We all listened intently, and sure enough, we soon located him by sound. He was moving down towards where we were, following the direction taken by the other moose. Crash! crash! went his antlers, and on he came steadily in our direction. Presently we made him out some 300 yards away coming through the quaking aspen and dwarf willows. Every now and again he stopped to rub his antlers against some suitable tree or to crash them against the dwarf willows. He looked very large, and obviously carried a heavy head. His antlers were light coloured and his coat seemed more tinged with grey than the majority of the moose we had seen previously—a sign of age, Andy said. We examined him very carefully through our glasses for some time. Andy thought he was good enough, although rather doubtful about the spread. His antlers were a very even pair, we could see, so I commenced to approach him with the object of getting a clearer shot. When within about 100 yards of the bull he got in among some quaking aspens which were pretty thick just there, and through those aspens I had to take my shot. I think the first shot must have hit him



MOOSE SHOT ON KENAI PENINSULA. 53" SPREAD.



a little too far back and lodged in his stomach. He never moved, but just stood stock-still. I fired again, but still he stood there. I expected every moment to see him fall over, but there he stood as if carved out of stone. Unfortunately, several subsequent shots I took at him were deflected by twigs of the aspen. Suddenly he turned round, looked at us, and then lay down. I thought this was the end, but never a bit. After lying down for a minute or so, he suddenly jumped up, whisked round, and was gone over the top of the ridge, which was a few yards above where he had been lying.

He had gone away as if nothing were the matter, and I think Andy and Hank thought I had not hit him at all. However, he had not lain down for nothing, and as we rushed up and topped the ridge we saw him climbing the steep bank on the other side, reach the top, turn away a bit, as if the ground were too steep for him, and then draw up. Another couple of shots, and he toppled over after a really very bad exhibition of shooting. But the aspens were a nuisance and no doubt accounted for the bad results. Before going across the gully to see him I wanted to try and find out what had been happening to my bullets, and examined the aspens which had been between the moose and myself. Many of the small branches had been chipped and no doubt made the bullets miss their desired billet.

When we did reach the dead moose the tape soon revealed a poor spread, but in every other way a worthy pair of antlers. The shanks were very short, which spoiled the spread. The following were the measurements made at the time: spread, 53 inches;

width of blade, 14 inches; length of blade, 32 inches; circumference of shank,  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches; number of points, 29. The brow antlers were exceptionally fine, the longest being 25 inches measured on the outside curve, with four points on it. The beast was an old bull, his incisor teeth being much worn, and he measured 6 feet 9 inches at the shoulder. His head was much knocked about by fighting, and there were several suppurating sores round his horns and forehead. One ear had the cartilage broken and was a mass of pus. I expect this was what accounted for the continual crashing of his antlers amongst the willows.

We had not much time, the afternoon being far spent, so, after having taken several photographs, we made tracks for camp.

The following day we returned to the carcass and removed the trophies, Hank and Andy being anything but pleased with the condition of his head-skin. It was an unpleasant task to skin it, but they made a first-class job of it. Hank carried the skull and antlers back to a point about half-way between the Funny and Killey Rivers, and left it there on the Moose Horn Trail to be picked up on the following day, thus saving so much of the journey back. The head-skin was thoroughly treated with about five pounds of fine salt as a preliminary measure, and folded up for the night to allow the salt to extract what blood remained in the skin.

The following morning broke fine and cold, there having been at least twenty degrees of frost during the night. We made our way up towards where I had shot the bull two days previously, and came across many moose on the way, but nothing worth bother-

ing about. When near where the carcass of the bull was, we came across fresh tracks of a brown bear. His trail was heading in the direction of the kill, and we expected to find him somewhere in the vicinity. From the ridge where I had taken the final shot at the moose, we could see the carcass and, sure enough, it had been pulled about and some of it eaten. We scanned the vicinity very carefully with our glasses, but could see no sign of the bear. We crossed the gully which lay between us and the dead moose, and very carefully ascended the opposite slope. There were several small draws close to the carcass, and we expected at any moment to jump the bear, which Andy felt sure would be lying close up to the kill. It was intensely exciting for a few minutes, but nothing happened; the bear had vanished. He had had a good feed off the carcass and then had made off up the valley, as his tracks plainly showed. But it was late in the afternoon when we found where he had gone, and there was no use in attempting to follow his tracks for any distance, as we were many hours behind him and would stand no chance of catching him up that day. There was much of the carcass left, however, and the bear would probably return, so we hoped to come across him some other day.

The following day we hunted upstream of camp, and although we bagged nothing, had a very interesting day's hunting. We made for the undulating plain on the opposite side of the Funny River and soon spotted some moose. There were several bulls in view at one time, but one seemed a specially worthy one, and we commenced to approach him. However, nothing eventuated, as we discovered after getting



close to him, that his antlers were poor. He got our wind and started off, and three more bulls joined him as he ran away; one had an injured shoulder and soon lagged behind. One of these four had a very wide-spreading pair of antlers, but the shovels were narrow, and although we tried to get close to the moose to get a better sight of their antlers, we were unable to catch them up, as they were now fairly on the run.

Later on in the afternoon we saw two bull moose walking up a steep hill-side directly away from us, and about a mile away. The one in the rear appeared through the glasses to have a fine head. It was much wider-spreading than the one in the van, and Andy seemed to think that it was a really big head. We followed them, but on topping the ridge over which they had disappeared some half an hour before we had arrived there, we were unable to discover in what direction they had gone. Listening, however, we presently caught the sound of antlers crashing together in the spruce forest below us, and we made haste to investigate. We followed the moose by the sound of the crashing, which continually moved away in front of us. Then we came to a small glade in which we found them. There were three moose here, and the one with the big antlers was easily distinguishable from his lighter-coloured coat and his greater height. We were on the edge of the glade, hidden among some spruce and grass, and we examined them very carefully with our glasses. I was for going for the big bull without waste of time, for he stood about eighty yards from where we were, and the whole front portion of his body was exposed. Andy, however, with his

great experience of judging moose heads, advised me to wait. One antler was a real beauty, very heavy, and with a long shank which made it stand out far from the head, but the other antler was poor, being crumpled and decidedly smaller. Had the right antler only equalled the left, there would have been no question that a really fine head was in front of us, but that wretched crumple in the right antler spoiled the whole symmetry of the head. While we were crouching down amongst the spruce and grass we heard quite close to us the unmistakable grunt of a bull moose. Very slowly, and within ten or twelve yards of where we were, came a big bull, pushing his way through the tangled mass of grass and dead spruce boughs, evidently intent on joining his friends who were in front of us. He passed to our right and was soon close to the other bull moose. It was very interesting to observe the way he approached the other bulls. Although he had grunted several times, there was apparently no answering grunt either of welcome or disapproval from the three bulls in the glade, and yet he kept on approaching them in a very indifferent manner. He carried his head low as he passed through the thick spruce, and would stop every now and then and remain quite motionless for a few seconds. He was absolutely unaware of our close proximity. We expected fireworks when he joined the other bulls, but nothing happened. The others took little notice of him, and he commenced to browse from the dwarf willows right alongside the big bull. A few playful thrusts with his antlers against those of one of the other bulls was all the diversion he created.

Suddenly from the far side of the glade we heard

a tremendous crashing followed by low grunts repeated very rapidly, and then the noise of antlers being thrashed against the willows. Now we are in for something, I thought. Crash followed crash, and out of the spruce on the far side of the glade, pushing his way through the thick spruce with the greatest truculence, came a wretched three-year-old bull with about four points on each antler. On he came swaggering like nothing on earth, stopping every now and then to smash down some unoffending willow, right up to where the other four bulls were feeding amongst the willows. Obviously much to his disgust, the four bulls took not the slightest notice of him. They never even looked up. He passed them and came to an isolated spruce tree in the glade. He walked right round this tree, his grunts by this time having quite a disappointed note in them. Then he stopped, and I am sure he said in moose language to himself, "What the devil shall I do next?" As he apparently found no answer, he disappeared out of the picture. It was all intensely interesting, really much better than the shooting part of the business. Andy said that the bull that had joined the other three, and which had passed so close to us, had a good head, but he did not recommend me to take him, because he thought we would be able to find something better later on. We started back to camp, and when skirting the glade to pick up the track home we got to windward of the moose. The moment they got our scent, up went their heads and away they went in fine style. We then discovered that on some high land on the far side of the glade, a portion which had been screened from our view when we were watching the moose, there were several cows.

That was the direction in which our three-year-old moose had gone, so perhaps he was not such a fool after all. It was now pretty well near the end of the rutting season, and I suppose the older bulls were not bothering much about what the youngsters did. A month previously I expect our youngster would have met with a different reception.

Another day, when looking for a good beast, we came amongst several bulls and cows, and located a bull grunting loudly and walking about in the greatest state of agitation. There were several other bulls quite close to us, and they all stood stock-still and watched the excited bull, probably feeling disgust at his making such an exhibition of himself. Close to where the bull was grunting and walking up and down, we spotted another bull lying down. He kept as still as a mouse, with his muzzle stretched straight out on the ground, obviously trying to make himself as small as possible. He was lying amongst grass and dead spruce boughs, and had managed to conceal himself quite well.

At last, on the 26th of October, I managed to bag my second bull, which brought my hunting to a close. We took a slightly different direction on this day, going back towards the Killey River and then working downstream a little, and coming back towards the Funny River. We saw comparatively few moose until after twelve o'clock, when we came into a large area of country which had been well cleared by the forest fire of forty-odd years before. Here, when we were wending our way carefully and slowly over the masses of fallen timber, we saw a bunch of moose on some rising ground about a mile away from us. A

careful scrutiny with the glasses showed several bulls and a large number of cows, and amongst the bulls was one which stood out as being larger than the others. This beast carried what looked like a good head, so we decided to try and close up. The wind was all wrong for a direct stalk, so we had to make a long detour until we had arrived at a position some half a mile behind the place where the moose were originally. This took us a long time, as we were continually running into other moose, several of whom were distinctly curious as to what our business was. We passed three fair-sized bulls, who made off in the direction of the main herd, and probably put them wise to the fact that there was something out of the common wandering about in their domain. Finally, after nearly two hours' creeping and crawling, we arrived at an absolute impasse. We were in very nasty stuff, with the moose in front of us at a distance of about 400 yards, with several cows and youngsters between us and where we thought the big bull was. There were, in addition to the fallen timber, many dead sticks standing up, and it was quite impossible to approach nearer without giving our position away to a very watchful cow who was standing directly facing us, obviously very suspicious, as her statue-like immobility showed. We backed out of the thick stuff we were in and tried to find another way round, but were unsuccessful.

Finally the cows got alarmed and started to run back towards the bulls, stopping every now and then, and sometimes staring in our direction. When they reached the bulls, which we could only see very indistinctly amongst the thick tangle in front of us, the

whole lot started off and made for a fringe of spruce which was slightly behind them. We rushed in only to see a very large congress of moose—there must have been at least thirty of them—running about in an open grass glade some way below us. The fringe of spruce had been growing on the edge of a steep decline which ended in a flat glade some hundred feet down. It took a few seconds to pick out the big bull, who was, unfortunately, at the far side of the herd, and very much mixed up with several other beasts. It was too far to risk a shot anyway; but before one could make any move they had disappeared into the thicket, going directly away from us. We rushed down the decline and crossed the glade to find that the ground started to rise almost at once towards another small ridge. We could hear moose crashing about in front of us, and by keeping below the line the moose had taken, we managed to find a little bit of open ground, through which we passed as quickly as possible. The ridge rose steeply on the far side, and presently we spotted two or three cow moose coolly staring at us only a few yards distant. We ran past them (I believe they were out of breath, for they looked as fat as steers ready for the butcher), and presently came to the top of the ridge and discovered a spot almost exactly the same as that we had just left—a grassy glade at the bottom of a declivity. Fortune favoured us this time, the big bull being on our side of the herd and about 200 yards away. I ran forward a little and, kneeling down, fired at him as he stood absolutely broadside on. He never moved, and I fired again. There was a smaller bull nearer to me than the big fellow, but slightly to my left. He simply

turned and stared at me after the first shot, and seemed absolutely bewildered. I ran in towards the beast I had fired at and passed quite close to the young bull, who was still undecided as to what to do. The wounded bull had turned round now and was facing me, so, taking a pull on myself (I was pretty well out of breath by now), I took a careful aim at his chest, and down he came with such a crash that Andy and I both thought that I had hit him in the brain. However, he pulled himself together and managed to sit up, but was too far gone to do anything else.

I finished him off at close quarters. In the meantime the other moose, who had run off at the sound of the first two shots into some aspens which grew thickly close by, came back into the open and were evidently quite unable to make up their minds where to go. They were undoubtedly a very stupid lot of moose. In the old days such an opportunity for meat hunters would probably have resulted in the destruction of the greater portion of the herd.

Looking at the moose I had shot, I said to Andy that surely this one had a 60-inch head, but no, the tape would not make it more than 53 inches spread, exactly the same as my first moose. Although this beast was a heavier animal than the first one, he was not so tall, only measuring 6 feet 5 inches at the shoulder. His antlers were not quite so heavy as those of the previous bull. He carried 24 points; the blades measured 34 inches in length and 11 inches in width, the shank being 9 inches in circumference, well clear of the burr—a very nice and symmetrical head, and a very good match to my first head.

The skin of the head and neck were in fine condition, but it was too late to do anything now if we wanted to get back to camp; so, after taking the inevitable photographs, we made for camp. We were a good long way downstream and did not reach our tents on the Funny River until after dark. This was the end of my moose hunting, although I intended to remain a few more days in the country, to try and get some moose photographs, and with the hope of getting on to a brown bear.

The following day Hank and Andy went to the dead moose to remove the trophies, but instead of bringing them to the Funny River, packed them directly to the Killey River to save transport.

Not much remains to be told. The following day we had a heavy fall of snow, which made it very difficult to get close enough to any moose to take their photographs. The brown bear had again visited the carcass of the moose killed on the 21st of October, but although it was easy to track him in the snow, we were many hours behind him. He was evidently a naturally suspicious beast, as his trail plainly showed where he had turned round on more than one occasion and watched his rear tracks. He had probably left the moose carcass before daylight, had made no beds near where he had been feeding, and was evidently taking no risks.

The last afternoon we spent in the moose country was crowned by the most glorious sunset that I have ever seen—and I have seen some beautiful sunsets in the Tropics and in Egypt. We were nearing camp just about five o'clock and were travelling towards the dying sun. There was a glorious glow in the sky, and



straight in front of us was a solid wall of the deepest crimson. Turning round to admire the colours, we saw that the sheep mountains, which were almost due east from where we were, were lit up with every hue in the rainbow, from the deepest purple to the lightest pink. It was absolutely magnificent, and Andy, Hank, and I stood and admired this priceless demonstration of nature in dead silence; then Andy, with a sigh, said: "What a pity we cannot photograph it!" Yes, indeed, what a pity! Such sights help to elevate the human mind from the sordid realities of everyday life. I shall never forget that sunset. It was a fitting end to my journey in the Kenai Peninsula. I thought of those beautiful words of an Indian sportsman, trying to give effect to his feelings on some such occasion. I quote them, as I believe they are unknown to most of my readers.

A little pause in life while daylight lingers  
Between the sunset and the pale moonrise;  
When daily troubles slip from weary fingers,  
And calm, grey shadows veil the aching eyes.

Old perfumes wander back from fields of clover,  
Seen in the light of stars that long have set;  
Beloved ones whose earthly toils are over  
Draw near as though they lived among us yet.

Old voices call me through the dusk returning,  
I hear the echo of departed feet——

All of us must have experienced that feeling of sadness as the day departs.

On 31st October we broke camp and made for the Killey River, where we found our flat-bottomed boat frozen in to the rim, but were able to get it adrift

and successfully negotiate the river. We made Skilak Lake in good time and, getting all our goods into the boat, soon had the Evinrude going and were traveling up the lake back to Cottonwood Creek, where we arrived just as evening was falling. The next day we re-salted all the sheep and moose capes, and packed them ready for the journey back to Seward. Our journey up the Kenai River took us three days, instead of the three hours that it had taken us to come down; but Andy, Lodge, and Bill, who relieved Hank when we left Cottonwood Creek, made fine time lining the heavy-laden boat up the river, the actual time expended in poling and lining being fifteen hours.

When we arrived at the landing a stiff breeze was blowing down the Kenai Lake, and Mr. Fuller, who very kindly allowed us to sleep in his new cabin, was of the opinion that it would not be possible to go up the lake for two or three days. However, our luck still held, and the next day we were able to get up to Andy's cabin, although it was really cold going up the lake against the stiff breeze that was blowing. In the afternoon we caught a train from the twentieth mile, which had come through from Anchorage, and that night slept in Mr. Sexton's hotel once more.

My trip was over. A few days' wait at Seward for the steamship *Alameda*, of the Alaska Steamship Line; a fine run down to Seattle through the Inside Passage; about ten days in Seattle, where I was extremely well entertained; a two days' journey down the Pacific Coast in the steamship *President*, of the Admiral Line; some anxious days in San Francisco

owing to uncertainty whether I should be able to get my passport through in time to enable me to catch my Pacific Mail steamer the *Ecuador* again; and finally, on the 14th of December I said *au revoir* to the Pacific Coast. I arrived back at my home in the Federated Malay States on the 27th of January, after an absence of just upon six months.

My trophies I left at Seattle with C. C. Berg, who was to set them up for me. They arrived in the Malay States some months after I had returned, in excellent condition and very well set up.

### CONCLUSION

Before finally closing this chapter I should like to record the valuable services rendered to me by Andy Simons, Hank Lucas, W. L. Lodge, and also by Bill Kaiser. As hunting and camping companions no one could want finer men; and with the knowledge possessed by them of the country and the habits of the game at one's disposal, it would be a poor sort of sportsman who could hunt in the Kenai Peninsula and not enjoy good shooting.

Regarding outfit, practically everything can be obtained in Seward. There are several excellent stores there which supply everything from a rifle to a shoe lace; and it is much better to consult the local authorities as to what is required than to bring loads of stuff from the East, much of which may have been made to sell and not to use. Providing the sportsman takes with him his own rifle, and possibly his tent, everything else can be obtained on the spot. Anyone, whether he be a citizen of the United States or not,



KILLEY VALLEY IN THE MOOSE COUNTRY



will find that every courtesy will be extended to him by those inhabitants of Alaska with whom he comes in contact. In fact, I suppose that it would be difficult to find another spot in the world where he could run across such a high average of fine fellows.

END OF PART I

.



## PART II





## CHAPTER I

### THE JOURNEY

And we go—go—go away from here!

On the other side the world we're overdue!

'Send the road is clear before you when the old Spring-fret comes o'er  
you,

And the Red Gods call for you!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

At the end of 1920 I left Singapore by the P. & O. mail *en route* to Alaska *via* England. I had come down to Singapore from my home in the Malay Peninsula and, having spent Christmas in that city, I was not sorry to commence my long journey to Alaska.

I arrived in England early in February, intending to stop there for about two months, then cross the Atlantic to New York, and after traversing America in easy stages reach Seattle in time to catch a steamer to Alaska, which would enable me to arrive there in time for the spring bear hunting.

I intended making a long trip, and being anxious to obtain some specimens for our National Collection in South Kensington, I had previously been in correspondence with J. A. McGuire of Denver, with a view to obtaining a letter of introduction to Dr. Nelson of the United States Biological Survey, who would be able to give me permission to collect for the British Museum.

I was therefore well armed with the necessary letters when I arrived in London, and lost no time in writing to Sir Sidney Harmer, the Director of the Natural History Branch of the British Museum, asking him for an interview with a view to ascertaining whether I could be of any help to the Museum by collecting some specimens for them for the mammal galleries. I saw Dr. Harmer and Capt. Guy Dollman, the latter being in charge of the mammal galleries, and in due course was asked to obtain for the Museum, if possible, a group of white sheep (*Ovis dalli*), specimens of the Canadian otter (*Lutra canadensis*), and some brown bear skulls. I had still, of course, to get Dr. Nelson's permit, which I hoped to be able to obtain when I visited Washington later on.

The end of March saw me on my way across the Atlantic in the White Star liner *Cedric*, which landed me in New York on April 8, 1921. My friend E., who would accompany me to the Alaska Peninsula after brown bears later on, travelled across the Atlantic with me, having been in London on business. While in New York, E. and I visited Bronx Park Zoological Gardens and had a pleasant day admiring the very fine collection of animals and birds there. I had received letters of introduction from Mr. McGuire to Dr. Hornaday, the director of the Bronx Park Zoo, to John Burnham, a well-known American big-game hunter and president of the American Game Protective Association, and, of course, also to Dr. Nelson.

Dr. Hornaday was not at Bronx Park the day we visited the Zoo, but I got in touch with him through his secretary and found that he and Dr.

Nelson had a conference in New York on Monday, the 11th of April, and I arranged to meet them at the Pennsylvania Hotel that afternoon. So I was able to kill two birds with one stone, figuratively speaking, as I expected to have to go to Washington before I would be able to meet Dr. Nelson. On the morning of the 11th I called on Mr. Burnham, and had a very pleasant half-hour with him.

At three o'clock of the same day I met Drs. Hornaday and Nelson in the former's room at the Pennsylvania Hotel, and felt myself greatly honoured to be able to meet two of the foremost naturalists of North America at the same time. Dr. Hornaday asked me to go out to lunch with him the following day to Bronx Park, and Dr. Nelson was anxious for me to come to Washington, whither he was returning the next day, so that I could see the Biological Survey's collection as well as the Smithsonian Collection of mammals, etc.; so I decided to carry out my original programme and visit Washington.

The following day was one of the most enjoyable of my life. Dr. Hornaday was kindness itself and showed me his magnificent collection of heads and horns and the very fine collection of big-game paintings for which Carl Rungius is justly famous. The painting of the brown bear struck me as being especially fine; one can almost see the bear take a sniff of the tainted air which has evidently offended his nostrils; and I have seldom if ever seen a picture of big game which was more "alive".

Bronx Park is chiefly Dr. Hornaday's work, and, as I remarked to him before I left, what a tremendous satisfaction it must be to him to contemplate the

magnificent collection of animals, and to realise that his labours have not been in vain. Would that all of us could look upon our work and be able to think as much.

The following day I travelled to Washington, and on the 14th of April I called on Dr. Nelson, who very kindly asked Mr. Preble of his staff to show me everything that was to be seen, in the comparatively short time at my disposal, of the National Collection, which included the Roosevelt trophies. Under Mr. Preble's guidance I spent a delightful morning. I lunched with Dr. Nelson at the Kosmos Club, where we met Charles Sheldon, whose reputation as one of America's foremost field naturalists I need not emphasise. I also met Mr. Mather, who is in charge of the United States National Parks. I felt I knew Mr. Sheldon very well from reading about his exploits in his own works and in Mr. Selous's account of his trip with Mr. Sheldon up the McMillan River in Yukon Territory, and of course was pleased to meet him. Mr. Sheldon asked me to go out to his house for tea, where I met Mrs. Sheldon and Dr. Nelson again. I was much struck with Mr. Sheldon's magnificent collection of sporting books, probably the finest private library of its type in the world. Books from every part of the globe, describing every sort of hunting in every sort of country, are to be found on those shelves.

I was very sorry to leave Washington, where I felt I had made new friends whose kindness to me I much appreciated. But I had a long way to go before I reached Seattle, and was due in St. Louis on the 16th and at Denver on the 20th of April, so had to leave Washington the next morning.

I duly arrived at St. Louis and was met by Mr. Steedman, who had very kindly offered to entertain me during my sojourn in his city. Mr. Steedman had hunted the previous year in that section of the Alaska Peninsula for which I was bound, and I had previously been in correspondence with him on the subject. As I intended to reach Seattle from England by crossing the United States, Mr. Steedman had very kindly offered me his hospitality in St. Louis on my way through. I much admired a very fine skin of a Peninsula brown bear (*Ursus gyas*) which Mr. Steedman had obtained on his late trip.

While in St. Louis I also met Ted Mallinckrodt, Jr., who had been with Mr. Steedman on the trip in question, and he showed me on the screen some beautiful photographs that he had taken of brown bears and other wild game. While on that trip, Mr. Mallinckrodt had obtained two brown bear cubs, both of which I saw in the Zoological Park; they were then about sixteen months old, I suppose, and were fine, well-grown specimens, and should, with reasonable luck, grow up into the "real thing" in a few years' time. They were both males and were named Chignik and Katmai, by Mr. Mallinckrodt, in remembrance of the trip to the Alaska Peninsula.

Mr. Steedman entertained me right royally while I was in St. Louis, and by taking me round the outlying portions of the city gave me a very good idea of what charming country there is within a very few miles of town. I was very sorry to say good-bye to St. Louis, but hope some day that I may see some of my friends from there in the Malay Peninsula after our big game. On arrival at Denver on the 20th I was

met by Mr. McGuire. I was Mr. McGuire's guest during the three days I stopped at Denver, being located at the Brown Hotel. Mr. McGuire showed me every kindness and hospitality during my stay in his city, and my visit there will always remain in my mind as a never-to-be-forgotten experience. This account is not written to describe the West, but rather to give my readers an account of my hunting in Alaska; so, although I would wish to describe the many beautiful sights that I saw while in the Rockies, I feel that I should pass on and arrive at Alaska as soon as possible, to tackle the account of what I really wished to describe.

While in Denver I, with Mr. McGuire, visited Colorado Springs, Buffalo Bill's grave on Lookout Mountain, something over 7000 feet above sea-level, and the local sights of the city itself. I was much impressed with the Denver Museum, to which I was taken by Harry James, a very well-known Colorado sportsman, who had accompanied Mr. McGuire on his Alaska expedition in 1918, so well described in Mr. McGuire's book, *In the Alaska-Yukon Game Lands*, published by D. Appleton & Company, New York, a book which should be on the bookshelf of every sportsman.

I left Denver on the 24th of April and travelled to San Francisco, where I stopped a couple of days and renewed some old friendships; leaving for Seattle on the evening of the 28th of April by the fast train, "The Oregonian," which landed me in Seattle on Saturday the 30th of April, giving me ample time to make my connection with the Alaska Steamship's steamer leaving Seattle on the following Tuesday.

But, alas for man's arrangements, a shipping strike started on the 1st of May which held me up in Seattle until the 22nd of that month, and very seriously upset the arrangements for my Alaska trip. It is unnecessary to go into details, but it will suffice to say that after ascertaining that none of the Alaska steamers would sail on schedule, and the officials at the offices being unable to give any information regarding what they would be able to achieve during the next few days, I found out through the kind services of the manager of the Bank of California that there was a motor schooner named the *A—l* which was leaving for the West about the 10th of May, which would land us somewhere near our hunting locality about the 20th of May.

I should have mentioned that soon after my arrival in Seattle I met my friend E., who had come over from New York direct and who had arrived in Seattle the same day that I had; as we intended going over to the Alaska Peninsula together, the strike had upset his arrangements as much as it had upset mine, and any method of getting across as soon as possible to the West appealed to us both. Unfortunately the extremely sanguine captain-owner of the *A—l* very much underestimated the work that was required to get his ship ready to go to sea on the 10th of May, and there never was the slightest chance of this vessel being ready by that date; but of course we only found that out after a perfectly exasperating delay. Had there been a reasonable doubt in our minds regarding this very serious delay we could have left Seattle by a most comfortable steamer belonging to the Pacific American Fisheries about the



16th of May, which would have saved us a great deal of time, and very much discomfort and annoyance. However, we were committed to the *A—l*, which, as it turned out, did not leave Seattle until the 22nd of May, really too late for the bear hunting which we had come so far to enjoy.

But it is an ill wind which blows nobody any good, because during our enforced idleness in Seattle we discovered that we might be able to get some trout fishing in the Olympic Mountains and consequently spent a few days at Lake Crescent Tavern, an enchanting place which, nestling as it does amongst the rugged peaks and the glorious timber of the Olympics, makes it an ideal spot for a holiday. To add to its charm we were well entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Singer, the very efficient proprietors of the tavern. The story of our fishing will have to keep for some other time; I have said before, we want to get at the bears, but everything seems to combine to keep us away from them.

E. and I had some wonderful fishing, catching specimens of Beardsley trout going up to over 10 pounds, cut-throat trout up to 4 pounds, and crescent trout up to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. What more could a sportsman desire? We could have spent more time there as it turned out, but hurrying back to Seattle to catch our boat we found that the date had again been postponed.

At last we did really leave Seattle, but owing to the *A—l* being overloaded some cargo had to be discharged before we could get our clearance papers, and another day was lost.

## CHAPTER II

### WEST, VERY FAR WEST

I think you would hear the bull-moose call, and the gluttoned river roar,  
And spy the hosts of the caribou shadow the shining plain.

R. W. SERVICE.

I WILL not attempt to describe the journey across the Gulf of Alaska in the *A—l*. She had twin engines which did not seem to hit it off exactly; they seldom pulled together. When the starboard engine was behaving itself the port engine was not, and *vice versa*. We took five days to get to Ketchikan, 649 miles from Seattle, but this effort was too much for the *A—l*, and we had to lay up there for two days while repairs to the engines were effected. While at Ketchikan, which is the first port in Alaska at which steamers touch when going through the inland sea, large quantities of very fine salmon were brought in to the New England Fish Company's dock by trolling boats.

These salmon were being sent in ice to the East. There were some magnificent fish in evidence, and I discovered that most of them were caught on a big brass or nickel spoon, trolled behind a heavy line, which again was attached to a pole suspended from the tackle of the trolling boat. I think in many cases the line was wound up on a small winch. Think what

sport those fish would give on proper tackle. There is no reason why they should not be caught that way, as long as they will take a spoon, which is beyond argument. I would strongly recommend some of the western fishing sportsmen to inquire into the possibilities of such fishing near Ketchikan. I was informed that these fish are caught for commercial purposes only, and I could not hear of any sportsmen who had been there for this fishing. Of course, there may have been people up there on sport intent, but I did not hear of them. Think, O brother fisherman, of a 60- or 70-pound salmon on the end of comparatively light tackle and all the ocean to play him in. Would it not be worth while?

We took on a small cargo of salt at Ketchikan, which the captain wanted for a fish catch which he expected to get up the Kuskokwim, where the ship was finally bound for; also several drums of "gas"; but it seemed to me peculiar that such loading should have been allowed, considering that we had been delayed at Seattle while cargo had been taken off the ship before we could get our papers. I had not noticed that any cargo had been thrown overboard! This ship was licensed to carry passengers—I think there were twenty—and there was something wrong in the state of Denmark when such a flagrant flaunting of the rights of the passengers was allowed to pass unnoticed and uncomplained about.

The truth of the matter is that the south-western portion of Alaska is an extremely difficult spot to get to, and people will put up with exorbitant rates of freight and passage to enable them to get there. There are also owners of ships who are willing to

take advantage of such conditions, and who do not show that consideration for the safety of their passengers which not only is necessary but which should be in the moral outfit of even the hardest-hearted individual.

Before leaving my home in Malaya I had been in communication with Andy Simons, the Seward guide, who had been with me when I hunted in Alaska in 1918. I had arranged to meet him at Seward in the early part of May and then go down to the Alaska Peninsula. This wretched shipping strike had, of course, upset all my plans, and I had wired to Andy from Seattle, informing him that I would have to miss Seward and would meet him somewhere to the westward.

Our noble motor schooner having been delayed and delayed, I had now managed to get Andy down on an island a little to the north of Kodiak Island, which island rejoiced in the name of Uzinki, a spot which I had arranged with the captain of the *A—* we would call at to pick up Andy and his wife and a guide for my friend E. Andy, of course, expected us at Uzinki about the time we left Seattle, so I had to telegraph to him from Ketchikan to the nearest telegraph station, which was on Kodiak Island. There was no telegraph station at Uzinki—perhaps the name was too much for them—but I knew that Andy was a discerning fellow and the chances were that when we did not arrive he would expect that I would try and communicate with him. The only source of communication was by telegraphing to Kodiak, and I expected him to go across to Kodiak Island and inquire for any telegram. This is exactly what

happened, but the weak link in the chain was the mentality of someone whom I never traced. When Andy sent over to Kodiak Island for the expected message he was informed that there was no telegram for him. This was days after I had wired from Ketchikan.

We got away from Ketchikan at last, after a delay of two days, and made for the Gulf of Alaska through Dixon Entrance, awaking on Sunday morning, the 29th of May, out of sight of land, with a dull sky but fortunately a calm sea. I say fortunately, because the *A—l* was not trimmed for heavy weather; she was obviously overloaded, and what sort of shape she would have made in a gale, I am glad to say we did not have to find out. The staterooms occupied by E. and myself were supposed to open out of a small central "saloon", but this "saloon" was loaded up with cargo and only a very small passage was left. It enabled us, however, to reach our staterooms by progressing crabwise between the piled-up cargo and the side of the "saloon". The ship was unheated, except in the engine-room and the galley. Again, I say, fortunately we did not have any really cold weather, otherwise it would have been extremely uncomfortable. It was quite unpleasant.

We progressed across the Gulf of Alaska at the magnificent average speed of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  knots, and on the 1st of June knew we were getting near the coast of Kodiak Island by the change in the colour of the water and the heavy fog we ran into. There are very extensive halibut banks to the east of Kodiak Island. On Thursday evening we made the harbour of Uzinki, but we disappointed the inhabitants somewhat by arriving from the west when we were ex-

pected from the east. However, a little matter like that did not disturb the genial captain of the *A—l*. The fact that we had gone a few dozen miles too far north was of no consequence.

I was delighted to see Andy Simons and Mrs. Simons on the wharf, both looking the picture of health and not a day older than when I had last seen them three years before at Seward.

I found that Andy had brought with him as a guide for E. a well-known hunter named L. A. Peel, whom I had heard of from Mr. Steedman, Peel having accompanied his party when they had hunted bears the previous year in about the same part of the country as we hoped to go to. Al. Peel was a thick-set, sturdy man about fifty years of age, and had the reputation of being a hard rustler and a good hunter. We were lucky to have been able to get hold of him, and with his assistance my friend E. was able to get three good bears.

There was a new salmon cannery at Uzinki, and we had a look through the factory, which was engaged chiefly in putting up cases of red salmon. We had to take on water at Uzinki, and I think the engineer—poor fellow—was glad of the opportunity to overhaul his engines. We left Uzinki with an increased passenger list the following morning, and made our way to Sand Point.

We heard at Uzinki that quite recently a hunter on Afognak, the island to the north of Kodiak Island, had been killed by a brown bear. I heard several people express their views pretty freely regarding the fierceness of the brownies on Afognak Island, and the wickedness of having a law which protected

them. Now, what was the real truth about the death of this hunter? Even the people who damned the brown bear were perfectly well aware of what had happened. Briefly, the story was this:

This man, who was an experienced hunter, accompanied by a friend, had gone out and "shot up" a female brown bear which had cubs. I think one or more of the cubs had been "shot up" too. Anyway, the unfortunate hunter told his companion to take care of the cubs, and he would follow up the wounded bear by himself. I conclude that she had left the cubs and bolted in another direction. He followed the bear and was never again seen alive. I think it was the day after when he was found, badly mauled and quite dead. What actually happened when he met the bear no one will ever know, and so far as this story is concerned no one need know. The point I wish to make is this—that this unfortunate man was killed following up a wounded female bear which had been accompanied by cubs. Do not blame the bear for killing him. It merely tried to do what almost any wild animal of its kind would try to do when cornered, and in this case the wild animal came out on top.

I hold no brief for the brown bear, except that the fact that it is a fearless animal makes it more attractive to me as a sportsman and excites my admiration as a man; but I do like fair play, and in this case this particular bear was not getting a "square deal". I shall have much more to say on this subject later. An unwounded brown bear did its best to get at me in a way which, I must admit, astonished me; but still I will not, even after a personal experience which I

cannot shut my eyes to, write the brown bear down as worse than other formidable and dangerous game.

Andy Simons had the previous year hunted brown bears with Messrs. Steedman and Mallinckrodt almost at the end of the Alaska Peninsula, getting into their hunting country *via* Cold Bay, and then packing across to the Bering Sea. Most of their hunting was done at the head of a creek which falls into Izembek Bay, and it was to this locality that Andy proposed we should go. The previous year, when Mr. Steedman had been in Izembek Bay, another hunter, Mr. Gilfillan, had been hunting on the Peninsula, but a little farther north, and had had extremely bad luck. Having met Mr. Steedman, Mr. Gilfillan decided to try again this year in the vicinity where Mr. Steedman had hunted the previous year, so I had to tell Andy that I was afraid that we would find the country we proposed to go to already occupied, because I knew that Mr. Gilfillan had left Seattle for King Cove some days before we left, and would have arrived long before we could hope to get to Izembek Bay.

Andy seemed rather upset about this, especially in view of the fact that the other part of the country which he knew well, the Pavlof Bay country, was at that time occupied by the Sykes Expedition, in which there were several hunters, who would no doubt cover a good deal of territory. So we had to think it over, Andy being of the opinion that we could still manage to find room in the Izembek Bay country for both parties.

We found the dreaded Shelikof Straits in good shape and had an uneventful journey through them.



But we had to go into a place called Uyak, on Kodiak Island, on our way to Sand Point, for repairs to the engines, and were delayed about half a day over that. There was a salmon cannery at Uyak, but it was not being worked this year. The repair shops were useful, however, to our engineer. As we proceeded down the straits we had fine views of the great mountains on the peninsula, which centre round the celebrated volcano, Katmai. At last, on the 5th of June, we landed at Sand Point, on Popof Island, one of the Shumagin Islands, which lie a few miles off the coast of the Alaska Peninsula in about latitude 55 N., of which Unga is the best known.

We expected Sand Point to be our last port of call so far as the *A—l* was concerned, having been given to understand that we would be able to hire a motor schooner there which would take us to where we wanted to go on the mainland. Shortly after our arrival at Sand Point the "king of Sand Point" came on board to see our captain, and as this potentate was the person who we expected would be able to help us on the next stage of our journey, I soon got the captain to present me to him, and started to sound him on what were the chances of being able to hire a motor boat at Sand Point which would take us to the mainland. The king thought it could be arranged. We found out at Sand Point that the Sykes party had been for some time in Pavlof Bay and that they probably would be leaving about this time, if they had not already left. Knowing that Mr. Gilfillan was down King Cove way, we thought it would be best to start off from Sand Point in the motor boat which the king had told us he could get for us, and let our

arrangements develop when we got to the mainland. The delay at Seattle had thrown us back weeks, and we were the last in the field. We had brought all our stores for our trip up with us in the *A—l*, and soon started unloading them on the wharf at Sand Point. I think the wharf, as well as most of Sand Point, belonged to the king. At least he thought it did, which comes to much the same thing on Popof Island.

Andy went ashore and soon found that there was trouble. The king was not a nice king after all. He seemed to resent the fact that we had come the whole way from Seattle to Sand Point and had had the audacity to bring our provisions with us. To come to his kingdom and to expect to get his assistance to go on a hunting trip and then to fail to buy extremely expensive provisions from him was not at all right. He gave it out that he was not quite certain whether he would be able to get a boat for us after all. When I heard this I immediately realised that if we landed at Sand Point we should be entirely at the mercy of the king, and as this did not appeal to me, after a hasty consultation, I asked the captain of the *A—l* if he could land us at King Cove, which he said he could do; so having reloaded our goods on to the *A—l*, we were in a position to tell the king to do what he liked about it. This move did not suit His Royal Highness, and we soon heard that he would like us to go up and see his store, and no doubt he would be able to assist us in any way we wanted; but this change in the regal attitude had come too late, and I trust that when we left Sand Point the noble king had been taught a lesson. I should mention that he was not really the king of Sand Point, but thought he

was, which, as I have said before, is almost the same thing on Popof Island.

We left for King Cove that evening and arrived there about 4 A.M. the following morning. We immediately landed our stores, and the *A—l* pulled out to go still farther west. As the old schooner waddled out of the beautiful little harbour of King Cove on that bright, clear summer morning, we could not help thinking how lucky we were to have arrived at King Cove at all; despite delays and obstructions we had at last got within reasonable distance of the bear country; and although I had no delusions regarding the *A—l*, at least she had got us to our destination and her captain had carried out his contract. To put the minds of certain doubting Thomases at rest in Seattle I immediately sent a wireless to say we had arrived safely at King Cove.

King Cove is an important fishery station belonging to the Pacific American Fisheries, but during 1921 the traps which the station served were not being worked, so, with the exception of a few men in charge of stores, etc., the place was deserted by the Company's employees. We soon met the night watchman, who immediately saved our lives by getting us some hot coffee. Later on we sorted out from our stores what things we did not want to take with us to the bear country and placed them in the Company's store.

We found out at King Cove that Mr. Gilfillan had not gone to Izembek Bay at all, but had gone into Leonard's Harbour, an inlet leading out of Cold Bay, and some considerable distance from where we desired to hunt. Our spirits rose accordingly, and we immediately set about trying to find out how we

could get from King Cove to the far end of Cold Bay. The cannery being closed, there was no hope of being able to get any assistance from that quarter, all their launches and motor boats being laid up, but we found that there were two dories, fitted with one-cylinder gasoline engines, which belonged to two persons who were not working for the fishery company and who were willing to hire them to us. That is to say, they were willing to take us round to Cold Bay at a rate of \$25 a day for each dory and the services of each man, the trip taking about six or seven hours. But their journey back was to count as a day, making a total of two days for two dories, or \$100 for such service, which seemed pretty "tall". However, we were absolutely in the hands of these people and had to agree to their outrageous terms. One of the dories had a good engine in it, the other a dud, which gave us endless trouble; but the proprietor did not charge any less for that! If we had argued about it he might have charged more, on the theory that it gave him more trouble.

One of these men, whom I shall call Alphonse, accompanied us on the trip; the other, whom I shall call "the Cockney"—he had, I think, been born somewhere within the sound of Bow Bells—only came as far as Cold Bay with us, I am glad to say. We intended to start that afternoon, but with the usual delays it was nearer ten o'clock in the evening before we got away. At least, that is to say, the Cockney's boat got away. Alphonse's engine would not start, and after fooling around with it for about an hour after the other boat had started, Alphonse suggested that we wait until next morning. However,

I said I was not having anything of that, and that he could go on trying to start the engine until it did start, and I refused to get out of the boat. Finally it did get away, and the other dory having waited for us, we soon joined up and proceeded south toward the entrance to Cold Bay.

The dories ploughed their way close to the coast for three or four hours until we entered the mouth of Cold Bay. It was very cold and extremely uncomfortable. In the early hours of the morning we were approaching the head of Cold Bay when the engine of our dory gave out; at least, Alphonse messed about with it, until in trying to throw the clutch in with the engine racing, he pulled the entire bed-plate loose.

It was very misty and we had to find a small opening at the head of the bay before the tide turned; otherwise we would be unable to get in at all until next tide. The Cockney had a compass which he pulled out and examined carefully. This was done, I suppose, to impress us, but only succeeded in amusing us. The Cockney's boat had to tow ours, and as the dawn gradually asserted itself we found ourselves near the little opening, the tide on the turn and a rip just commencing, against which we could hardly make any headway. However, we managed to make it, and just got through into the little bay in time. We had to cross this bay, a distance of perhaps two miles, before we would come to the landing-place which Andy had used the previous year when he was with Mr. Steedman. We soon made this distance, despite the fact that the Cockney's dory was doing double work, and found at the landing-place a native Indian hut, an igloo, which was the only shelter

there. It was 4.30 A.M. when we landed, and after having some breakfast we rolled ourselves up in our sleeping kits to try and make up for the want of sleep the previous night.

The Indians whom we had engaged at King Cove to help pack our goods across to Izembek Bay turned up early in the morning. They had come overland from King Cove, a distance of about fifteen to twenty miles.

About one o'clock Andy and Al. Peel, with the two Indians, made a commencement to pack some of our stuff across toward Izembek Bay, and returned in the evening, having cached the goods at an old igloo which belonged to Alphonse, which was about six miles from our camp on Cold Bay. In the evening E. and I had a stroll round and saw quite a few old bear tracks and plenty of caribou tracks, but saw nothing in the flesh. The caribou which are to be found in this portion of the Alaska Peninsula are *Rangifer granti*, the typical barren-ground caribou. At some time or other there must have been large herds of these caribou which visited this part of the country, numerous wide trails being found in all directions; but I suppose owing to the unrestrained and unchecked killing by Indians the herds have disappeared, and only small bands of generally less than a dozen are seen. I think a herd of fifteen was the largest we saw at any time.

Before we broke up camp the following morning we saw across Cold Bay a brown bear. He was clearly silhouetted against the brightness of the morning sky, and we followed his movements with our glasses for some time with considerable interest.

He was a good-sized beast, but considering that half our camp had been moved over towards Izembek Bay and that he was going in exactly the opposite direction, it was not within the bounds of practical hunting to go after him. Besides, Andy was very confident that we should have no difficulty in picking up plenty of bears where we proposed to hunt, and there was no need to alter our arrangements because we saw one bear. He was not the "only pebble on the beach".

## CHAPTER III

### IN BEAR LAND

#### THE SONG OF THE CAMP FIRE

Gather round me, boy and grey-beard, frontiersmen of every kind.  
Few are you, and far and lonely, yet an army forms behind:  
By your camp fires shall they know you, ashes scattered to the wind.  
R. W. SERVICE.

WE had indeed arrived in "Bear Land", as we were very soon to find out; but before proceeding with the hunting let me attempt to describe the locality we had come to. The southernmost portion of the Alaska Peninsula is practically treeless, the country being covered with coarse grass in the swamps, a few stunted willows in the creek beds, and in places large and small patches of alders on the hill-sides. The high land is mostly stony except near the coast, but the steep, rugged sides of the hills which radiated from Pavlof Mountain were still covered with snow.

Generally speaking, the walking over the low-lying country was extremely bad; one either progressed through swamp well over one's knees, or balanced oneself stepping from nigger-head to nigger-head. When on the latter one wished for a swamp, and when in a swamp one longed for the excitement of the wobbling nigger-heads. There were many creeks which meandered through the swamps, and



along the banks of these creeks the going was sometimes quite good; also on the mountain-sides, below the snow, the ground was sometimes hard and provided good walking; but taking it all round it was difficult country to travel over in comfort. But one is a fool to expect comfort if one goes bear-hunting. I merely interpolate these remarks in case some reader might want to go to the end of the south-west Peninsula of Alaska for a walking tour.

Our camp was placed on the side of a hill which overlooked a plain perhaps three miles wide and ten miles long. In this plain ran the stream which we named Izembek Creek, for the excellent reason that it emptied itself into Izembek Bay. Although there were other streams which did this, this being the first we came across, it naturally annexed the name of the bay. The hill-side on which we camped was a low spur from the foothills which connected up with the mountains, and by climbing less than a hundred feet at the back of our camp we could look over another swampy plain which stretched toward the west for about three miles and was then stopped by another hill similar to the one we were camped on. This was again followed on the other side by another swamp which ran nearly to Moffat Bay on the Bering Sea, being bounded by some high sand-hills, on the other side of which was the sea. We hunted, not only all over these plains and spurs and on to the beach of Bering Sea, but also right up to the head of Izembek Creek, on the mountains at the back of this creek; in fact, on to the spurs of Pavlof Mountain itself, and saw a very large number of bears.

E. and I, after comparing notes and after elimin-



CARIBOU SHOT ON 10TH SEPTEMBER

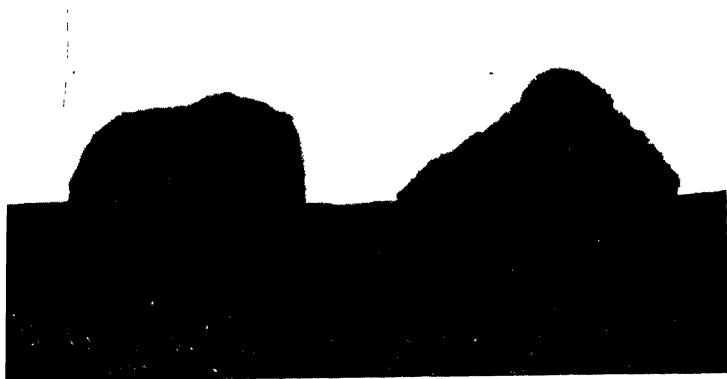


"THE GUARDIANS" AND KUSKOKWIM RIVER





BEARS' BATHING POOL



ROCKS ON PLAIN NEAR IZEMBEK CREEK  
Bathing pool at the back of rocks. Bear trail in foreground



ating any bears which we considered might have overlapped, and any which we thought we might possibly have seen twice, agreed that we had seen at the end of the trip more than 100 different bears. This was after the alders were in leaf—of course our delay had made this inevitable—and I feel sure that we did not see all the bears in the country we covered, or anything like all of them. Mr. Steedman had told me that when he was with Mr. Mallinckrodt the previous year they had seen an astonishing number of bears. When I say that we saw one evening *at least* fourteen bears come out or go through one patch of alders, I can perhaps give my readers some sort of idea of what there was in the way of bears in that country. It was indeed "bear land". The photographs I have shown here will give some idea of the country. I think the view showing the bear trails in Izembek Valley is a very extraordinary one.

The 9th of June was the first day on which we went out hunting, E. and I taking separate directions. The previous evening from the top of the hill at the back of the camp we had seen four bears on the hill-side which ran at right angles to the one we were on, and determined to hunt in that direction at the first opportunity. We were each anxious to obtain good specimens of *Ursus gyas*, but we had no intention of taking the first thing that came along. Andy quite agreed, and thought that it would be a good thing to have a look round first and try and locate any big bears. That morning we saw seven or eight bears, but none that we thought worth bothering about. They were mostly small or females. E. went below us along the edge of the hill skirting the swamp,

and we went along on the higher ground some 400 or 500 feet above the swamp. This hill-side was cut up by numerous watercourses which afforded splendid cover for bears.

While Andy and I were some five or six miles from camp we heard a shot below us and very shortly afterwards saw a light-coloured bear show himself above the rim in front of us, to stop immediately and turn back the way he had come. We surmised that E. had had a shot at this bear and missed him. E. told us in the evening that that was exactly what had happened. He had had a difficult shot, but had thought that the bear was worth trying for.

The following day Andy and I hunted up Izembek Creek, and E. went back to the same country that he had visited the previous day. Again we saw no big bears, although we saw about half a dozen fair-sized ones. The trouble was, I think, that the alders were beginning to put on heavy leaf and it was difficult to pick up bears in these thick patches; the older bears were less likely to stop out in the open than the younger ones, especially considering that it was now very warm during the day. When we got home in the evening we heard that E. had had quite an adventure with a bear which he had hit two or three times, but which had finally got away from him. At least, E. and Al. Peel had thought it advisable to leave it until the morrow, expecting to find it dead where they had last seen it. This proved to be the case, and when next morning we both went in that direction we found E.'s bear dead. It proved to be a big female in good fur, and E. was justly very pleased at his good luck. This was first blood for E. He and Al. Peel remained

behind to skin out their bear, and Andy and I went on to the westward to try our luck.

Before I proceed to relate what happened on this memorable morning I must describe the weapons which I had with me. I had brought from England two rifles, one a single-barrelled rifle made by Bland of King William Street, London; a rifle known as a .450 No. 2, which implies that it has a bore of .450 with a chamber bored out to take a bottle-shaped cartridge, the lower portion of which has a bore of .500. This rifle fired a cartridge containing 80 grains of cordite and threw a 480-grain bullet, with a muzzle velocity of about 2150 foot-seconds—a very powerful weapon. The action was on the falling-block principle, one of the strongest actions known.

The other rifle I carried was a .450-400 made by William Evans of Pall Mall, London, double-barrelled, throwing a 400-grain bullet propelled by 60 grains of cordite, with about the same muzzle velocity as the other rifle. I am aware that in the United States double-barrelled rifles are hardly if ever used; but it is the general practice of English sportsmen to use such rifles against dangerous game, and considering that I have made use of them for about twenty-five years, it was natural that I should take one as my chief weapon to Alaska.

E.'s bear lay dead just at the first bench below the low hills which lay directly behind our camp. We soon made our way up one of the many short spurs to a sort of plateau which stretched for some few hundred yards on the top of these low hills before the real climb started, which would take us into the mountains. This plateau was covered with short scrub,



stones, and reindeer moss, and the walking was fairly good going. There were many small depressions which made the stalking easy. We had only been on the plateau a few minutes when we spotted a light-coloured bear about two miles away. This bear looked bigger than anything I had seen, and Andy thought that it was a fairly good one, so we decided to try and get up to it. The bear appeared to be feeding and was absolutely undisturbed. Our stalk did not take long, nor was there any difficulty attached to it; from the commencement the wind was blowing steadily in our faces and there was plenty of broken ground between us and the bear, which enabled us to keep out of sight.

When we had arrived at a point about 300 yards away from where the bear was we stopped to study carefully the position and to make quite sure that we should be able to approach without being held up by unsuitable ground. The bear was now in a small depression, and when we stood up we could see the outline of its back quite clearly. It still looked a good-sized bear. What we wanted to do was to get to the edge of the ridge which shut the bear more or less out of view, and we reckoned that from this ridge we should be within thirty or forty yards of our quarry.

We moved along, but presently came to a place where the ground was a little higher than the spot from where we had last had a look at the bear, and here we commenced to crawl, getting a small rock between us and where we thought the bear was. I was carrying the single-barrelled rifle, Andy the double. I conclude that when I started to crawl unconsciously I opened my rifle and took out the shell,

which I placed in my pocket. I no doubt did this from habit, it being obviously unwise to have a shell in the chamber of one's rifle when crawling through short scrub.

When we got to the rock, which was almost on the edge of the rising ground, on the other side of which was our bear, we stopped to straighten up and have a look at the beast. As I slowly peered round the rock I saw that the animal was moving across our front and slightly toward us. The rise in the ground tailed away to our left and the bear was evidently making in that direction. If it continued in that course it would probably pass us to the left about thirty yards away. Seeing the bear moving off like this, and being anxious to get Andy's opinion regarding whether he thought it was big enough to shoot or not, I turned round and whispered to him whether he could see it. He said he could not—he was a little behind me and from his position the bear was invisible.

In the meantime I had quite forgotten that I had removed the shell from my rifle. I turned round toward the bear and then quite plainly saw it to my left, passing in front of me, providing a "sitting" shot at about thirty yards. I did not wait to hear what Andy had to say regarding its size, but pulled on the bear. As I had no shell in my rifle, of course nothing happened. Andy, hearing no explosion, naturally thought I had not pulled the trigger, and now seeing the bear properly for the first time whispered in my ear not to fire at it, as he did not think it was a very big one and was probably a female anyway.

I thought I had had a miss-fire, still forgetting about the removal of the shell and, gently opening

the breech of the rifle, saw to my intense astonishment that the chamber was empty. I quietly slipped in a shell and as quietly closed the breech. Now I had made another mistake, which I did not realise at the time, and it was this: after one has pulled the trigger of this falling-block rifle the shell is ejected by a sharp downward pull of the under lever which opens and closes the breech. This ejects the shell and re-cocks the action. By opening the breech quietly and closing it equally quietly I had not cocked the rifle, so I now had a loaded rifle in my hand, but it was uncocked, and was in that condition quite useless.

In the meantime what had become of the bear? Well, the bear was still almost in the same place as when I had tried to fire at it, because the narration of these foolish mistakes of mine has taken much longer than the execution of them. As the bear moved on our sheltering rock was now of no use, and a slight sideways movement of its head disclosed to the beast the fact that something was wrong with the rock, and it stopped and turned round in our direction. Now we did another foolish thing, which might have got us into serious trouble. We stood up and tried to "shoo" the bear away.

I had made up my mind not to fire at it, taking Andy's advice that we should be able to get something better later on, and not *wanting* to shoot the bear any longer, and considering that it was facing us at about thirty yards, probably not having the slightest idea what we were, we thought that a slight demonstration which would disclose to the bear the fact that we were human beings, would soon put it well on its way in the opposite direction. Not a bit of it. The

bear stood its ground, and blew his nose at us. It could not get our wind, so I suppose did not realise that we were humans. We began to get a little uneasy, not because we thought there was any real danger, but because I thought that I might have to shoot a bear which we had decided was not good enough to fire at.

The bear "looked sort of mean", so Andy described it afterwards, and, still blowing his nose at us, took a step or two in our direction. We backed, and Andy said that he believed he was going to attack us. Some kind fairy put it into my head to take the double-barrelled rifle and give Andy the single—I do not know why I did that except that I suppose the moment the idea of a charge suggested itself my instinct asked for two shots instead of one, to meet any difficulty that might come along—and the next thing we were aware of was the bear with a loud snort coming straight for us.

I must admit I did not think up to the last moment that the bear would charge. When about fifteen yards away it received my 400-grain bullet in the chest and went a beautiful crumpler—right on its head. Before one could wink that bear was spinning round on the ground, tumbling about on its head and throwing itself from side to side, the whole performance being carried out with the most amazing rapidity. It made no noise. I fired my second barrel at the whirling mass of fur, which probably missed any vital spot, because the bear then managed to get on its legs and simply spouted blood from the hole in its chest. By this time I had reloaded and fired again, hitting it through the shoulder, which again brought the bear

to the ground and again produced some wonderful evolutions on the part of the animal.

While this was going on I was conscious of hearing the most extraordinary noises from Andy behind me, which I was unable to understand. I had naturally no time to ask him what it was all about. Suddenly the bear remained still for the fraction of a second, which made me think that the end was near, then picked itself up and started to shuffle off away from me but slightly across my front. This gave me a perfect chance behind its shoulder, which immediately put it down for good. "Huh! Huh!!" said Andy, and then, "What the hell is the matter with this damned gun?" Andy had been trying to fire off the rifle at the charging bear, and, of course, as already related, it was so fixed that it could not go off. Later on I explained to Andy what had happened, but he shook his head a good deal. I think he must have written me down as a pretty good ass, which is exactly what I was.

When we came to examine the bear we were not disappointed. It was a female, but in magnificent fur. Her coat was very long and of a most beautiful golden shade, edged off with darker colouring on the chest and belly.

The bear had fallen in a good spot to enable us to skin her out fairly easily, and when that job was done we made our way back to camp. Andy and I discussed at considerable length the behaviour of the bear. Up to that time I would never have believed that a wild animal unwounded and without young—this bear was without cubs—would drive an attack home without the slightest provocation. I do not



FEMALE BEAR SHOT ON 11TH JUNE



CAMP NEAR HEADWATERS, IZEMBEK CREEK



know that I believe it now. The indictment against this bear would certainly be a strong one if charged with an unprovoked assault; but was it an assault? The bear had not got, in fact could not get, our wind. All bears are notoriously short-sighted and short-tempered, and all it saw was two figures making extraordinary movements and horrible noises. I feel sure that she had not the slightest idea of what it was before her, and being uncertain she ran at us *to frighten us away*. That is my reading of the phenomenon of the "charge" of this bear; and I cannot believe that it was an unprovoked assault against human beings with knowledge aforethought.

I heard so many stories against the brown bear, so many expressions of hatred against it for its unprovoked assaults against human beings, that I was anxious to experience something of the sort myself. Well, I had my experience, and I am still unconvinced that the bear is the bad character that some people try to make out it is. I think it is the same with many large-bodied and large-hearted animals all over the world. At times they retaliate and kill the hunter or would-be hunter, and they get a bad reputation which they do not really deserve.

In the Malay Peninsula the species of wild cattle peculiar to that country, known as the seladang, is considered in popular opinion to be an exceptionally fierce beast which is hunted at one's peril. This is of course absolute nonsense. Seladang are no different from other wild animals, most of which are intolerant of the scent or presence of man.

The following morning, the 12th of June, we decided to move our camp up Izembek Creek to a spot



where the creek forked, about ten miles from our present camp. We sent the Indian packers over to Cold Bay with the two skins we had got. Alphonse was the happy possessor of a dory which he had found on the beach of Bering Sea on the west side of Moffat Cove, and we utilised this dory for the transport of our outfit to the new camp site. We sent Alphonse up the river with the dory and the rest of us went overland to the spot decided on for our camp.

We skirted a large plain through which Izembek Creek runs, and on our way up saw many signs of bear and caribou. We also saw two white swans, probably whistling swans, obviously mating. We got to the site of our camp about mid-day and were soon busy clearing a place for our settlement. In the afternoon I went out below the camp, where there was a small creek running into Izembek Creek, which produced a good basket of brook trout. In the evening, after the trout had been cleaned by the cook, Mrs. Simons, and been placed outside the cook tent, a mink came out of the little creek close to our camp and helped himself to our dinner.

The following day, which was bright and hot, Andy and I went up the main creek after bear. We saw five or six, but nothing big and consequently not worth going after. The season was now rather late, and the alders being in full leaf, the result was that it was very difficult to locate the bears except very early in the morning and late in the evening, when they were more likely to be found on the open patches of grass rather than in the shelter of the alders. However, we were unable to rectify this now, and had to make the best of what was undoubtedly a

regrettable state of affairs, for which we were not to blame.

The next morning Andy and I went up the other side of the creek until we came to the foot of the mountains, part of the spurs from Mount Pavlof. Here we located a bear and her two yearling cubs, which we watched for some time. Although we covered a good deal of ground during the day, we were again unable to locate any bear which appeared to come up to the standard of size which we hoped to find.

On the 14th of June Andy and I went right up to the head of Izembek Creek and into the mountains. On our way up the creek we saw six caribou (*Rangifer granti*) which we came upon at close range in a small grass clearing. The wind was blowing directly across the clearing, and the caribou were in such a position that they were unable to get our scent. They stared at us for a few moments at a range of possibly fifty yards—two of them had the makings of very fine antlers, which were of course, at this time of year, still in velvet and incompletely developed—when they wheeled round and made at full speed for the mouth of the small grass clearing which would take them into the main plain. This manoeuvre would carry them directly across our wind, and I whispered to Andy to watch carefully and see exactly what they did when they got our scent. Their action was most astonishing. Directly they got our wind the six caribou stopped dead, as if they had come up against a fence, wheeled round, and dashed back into the small clearing, stopping again and staring hard in our direction. I suppose they did not wish to take to the

mountains, but they also did not wish to cross our scent. However, the leader of the herd made another dash for the invisible barrier which had turned them before, and being a few yards ahead of the other five, apparently made up his mind to go through. This he did without any hesitation and was followed almost immediately by the other five. It was extremely interesting to see the way these caribou pulled up on the first occasion when they got our wind, although the sight of two human beings had not had any very alarming effect on their sensibilities.

We followed up a spur coming down from the mountains and, reaching a ridge which looked into a small valley some 500 feet below us, saw a female bear with two yearlings playing in the grass and scrub which was interspersed amongst small patches of alders. We watched these bears through our glasses for some time. There was nothing to shoot in front of us, but the antics of the bears were quite sufficient to keep us interested.

Presently, however, out of a patch of alders close to where the bears were there came a large male bear. He looked to me to be quite the biggest bear we had seen up to date, but Andy did not think that he was anything to be enthusiastic about. He was in good fur, which was very dark in colour. We noticed almost immediately that he was lame in his off hind foot. The moment he approached the mother and cubs the former hustled her cubs away into the alder patch and stood up in front of the male who did not attempt to go very close to her—I suppose she told him in bear language to keep away—but the moment she moved off the male followed.

It was apparent to us that the female thought a good deal more of her cubs than she did of the male, and whether she was afraid for the cubs, that is to say that he might interfere with them, or not, it is impossible to say; but she undoubtedly, so soon as the male appeared on the scene, made up her mind to get away from him with her cubs without undue delay.

Her strategy was remarkable. Whether she knew or not that the male was lame I cannot say, but she immediately started hustling her cubs ahead of her up the steepest part of the mountain that arose in a gigantic precipice in front of us. There she found a deep gully which cut a gash in the cliff and selected this as her route. The male bear started to follow her, but was evidently thoroughly fed up. He did not like to give up his objective, but at the same time he did not want at all to climb the mountain or wallow through the deep snow in the wake of the female. It was very hot, the old bear's coat was still pretty long, and the exertion of climbing up the mountain on a lame leg must have taxed his energies to the utmost.

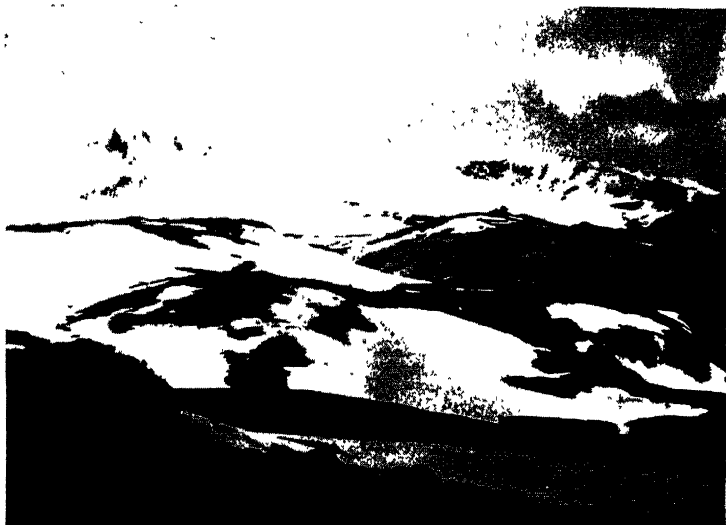
The mother and cubs thought nothing of going straight up the mountain, but the old male about every twenty or thirty yards lay down in the snow, sometimes on his back, sometimes on his face, our glasses revealing the fact that he was distinctly distressed and upset after his exertions. He might truthfully be described as being "all hot and bothered". We watched them, I suppose, for a couple of hours. Up and up went the mother and cubs, until they disappeared over the ridge far above the glade in which they had been playing. By that time the old fellow

was not more than half-way up the mountain, but he plodded steadily on, his halts getting more and more frequent, until finally he also disappeared over the snow-line at exactly the same place where the female had passed with her cubs. I could not help thinking of the poem of "Excelsior", and I hope that the male's persistence was duly rewarded at some future date.

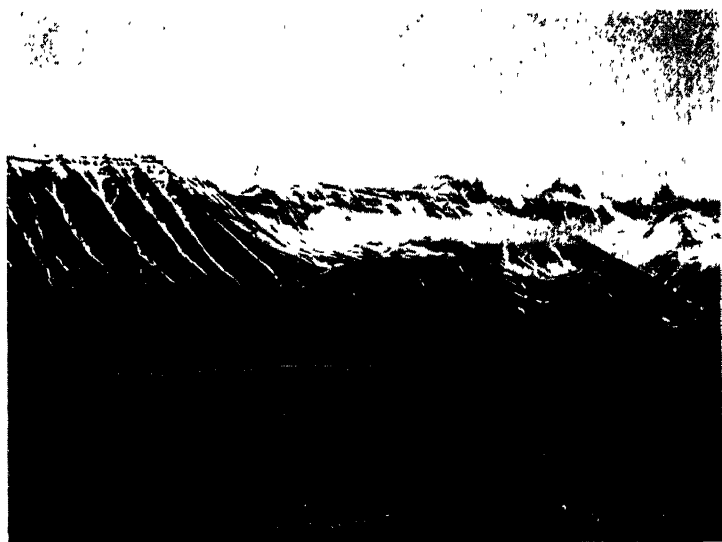
Before he had started to climb the mountain he had passed underneath a small bluff which was directly below us, and we could undoubtedly have got very close to him if we had wanted to shoot him; but on Andy's expression of opinion that the male was not one of the largest size I decided not to go after him. We certainly had, as an ample reward for sparing him, a most entertaining picture of these bears climbing the mountain.

The next morning we went out in another direction; in this case straight across the plain from camp, and saw what appeared to be a big male bear travelling across the nigger-heads at a great pace, obviously with some object in view. We found shortly afterward that the object was a female bear on the other side of the valley, and later on we saw them travelling together along the hill-side, which was very fairly covered with alders. We crossed the plain, but although by this time we had lost the exact locality of where the bears were, we were able to make a detour and get above the large alder patch into which they had previously disappeared.

Unfortunately the wind was very bad, and we had the mortification of seeing the male bear, which was a shootable beast, disappear at great speed from the



MOUNTAINS AT HEAD OF IZEMBEK CREEK



BEAR TRAILS IN VALLEY OF IZEMBEK CREEK



alders some considerable distance from where we were. We saw no sign of the female. The hot weather undoubtedly had a disastrous effect on the direction of the wind from our point of view, because the valley where we were camped, leading up to several narrow gorges surmounted by snow-clad mountains, acted as a funnel up which the wind blew steadily nearly all day. We were in the position of giving any bears that were at the head of the valley our wind almost before we left camp. It was therefore difficult to get anywhere near the ground which we wanted to prospect for bear without running the risk of advertising our presence beforehand. There was, however, no way of getting into the head of the valley except by the plain, the mountains on both sides being very steep and rugged, and we simply had to make the best of a bad job.

We saw also three or four other bears during the day, but none of them were up to the mark. There was a small reddish-furred bear which seemed to live in the swamp opposite our camp; we saw him there several mornings.

During the next two or three days we had no luck in "connecting up" with any big bear, but we saw five or six bears every time we went out. There was one small valley in which there was a female with three cubs. This bear was generally in evidence on a large snow-slide where the cubs seemed to find plenty to amuse them.

One day we saw two big bears come across from the south side of the valley, and, travelling at a great speed, disappear into the mountains on the north side. Mr. Gilfillan, whose camp was in Leonard's



Harbour, was hunting in a valley which ran parallel to the valley of Izembek Creek, and I think it is quite possible that the two bears we saw had been frightened or disturbed by him. With my glasses one day I saw Mr. Gilfillan and his guides about three miles away, on the mountain-side to the south of our camp.

The day we saw the two bears crossing the valley we followed the direction they had taken, and although we never came anywhere near them, we found a place in the thick alders on a steep hill-side where the previous winter several bears had "holed up". They had made, at some time or other, enormous excavations in the hill-side, and probably these "holes" had been used more than one season.

The astonishing pace at which a bear covers country has to be seen to be believed. These two bears seemed to cross from south to north of the Izembek Valley in a few minutes, although where they crossed was a distance of at least two miles. They did not appear to be running, but simply walking very fast. An examination of the tracks of a big bear will disclose the fact that when the beast is walking fast his hind foot does not step on the track made by his fore foot but overlaps it by a foot or 18 inches. This long stride is no doubt what accounts for the pace at which they travel.

On the 18th of June I decided to make a small side trip with Andy up a tributary of Izembek Creek. I spent the morning fishing, and caught some nice brook trout, but took good care to have these trout placed in some position which would enable us to eat them. The mink had had quite enough last time.

In the evening Andy and I took two small packs across the creek and up to the tributary where we intended to stop the night. We came across the track of a very big bear, but this was old and there was no sign of the bear being then in the locality. This track measured no less than 17 inches in length. It was, of course, the track of a hind foot.

Although it was very hot when we were crossing the plain, an icy cold wind was blowing down from the glacier at the head of the creek and we got the full benefit of it when we reached the narrow portion of the valley. We found, however, a sheltered spot under some alders, where we made a very comfortable temporary shelter. Later on in the evening we saw a light-coloured bear coming down the valley toward us. It crossed the creek and went up on to a bench behind our camp. I could no doubt have shot this bear had it been big enough, but here again we were disappointed, the animal on closer examination proving to be only a medium-sized one. The bears were now rutting; were moving about rapidly and covering a great deal of ground. The salmon had not commenced to run up the creeks and it would be more or less a matter of luck whether one would be able to locate a big bear or not. There were a number of bears in this valley and in the mountains surrounding it, but, as I have said before, the alders being in full leaf and the weather being hot, the big fellows were invisible during the greater part of the day.

It was pretty cold during the night, but in the morning after a good breakfast of porridge and fried bacon we went up to the head of the creek, failing to see any signs of big bears. We returned to our main

camp about mid-day, and in the afternoon I caught a few more brook trout.

While I had been away E. had shot a nice male bear in good fur, but it was not a very large beast.

We now decided to move camp and go down to the Bering Sea side of Izembek Creek, to a place called Moffat Cove.

## CHAPTER IV

### *URSUS GYAS*

Oppress not the cubs of the stranger, but hail them as Sister and Brother,  
For though they are little and fussy, it may be the Bear is their mother.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

ON the 20th of June we sent Alphonse away with the dory, with all our stores, tents, etc., toward the mouth of Izembek Creek, and then made our way across the foothills with the idea of meeting him at an igloo on one of the bays west of where we had previously hunted. We had a long day's march, and toward the evening when we thought we were getting near the igloo we came across a large patch of alders, outside of which we saw two bears. One was a big beast. E. did not want to go after them, so Andy and I left E. and Al. and Mrs. Simons on the hill-side while we went off after the bears.

On our way to the big patch of alders, a patch of about two miles in length by an average of half a mile wide, with grass clearings cutting into the alders in dozens of places, we put up a small bear. It ran across our front and into a small patch of alders. As it ran into this patch of alders it put up a second bear, which ran out of the other side and disappeared into another small patch. This second bear was a biggish

one, so we waited until he reappeared, as we thought he probably would, and presently he came out from a long narrow patch of scrub. He looked in our direction, having evidently spotted us, but he had not yet got our scent. He then circled round with the object of getting to leeward of us. I hesitated for some seconds whether I should shoot at him or not. He was in fair fur but very dark, and did not appear to me to be a very big one, certainly not as big as the one we had seen outside the alders at the time we had left the others on the hill-side. The bear stopped and gave me a perfect broadside shot, at about 150 yards, but as Andy was against my firing at him, saying that he did not think the fur was in very good condition, I refrained. The bear then moved on and, getting our wind, turned tail and disappeared at great speed in the direction of the mountains.

We continued our journey down towards where we had seen the first bear, soon entering a small patch of grass surrounded by alders, and as we came in at one end a bear came in opposite us. In other words, we suddenly found ourselves within twenty or thirty yards of a big bear. We were both equally surprised. Unfortunately, I was carrying the .450 No. 2 rifle, which I merely took as a spare rifle and have used very little. Andy had the double .400. I quickly threw up the .450 and, taking a hurried shot at the bear, apparently fired over him. The big brown turned tail, and as I had no further shot in my rifle, I had no opportunity to fire at him again before he disappeared into the alders. It was all over in a few seconds. It was unfortunate that we should have run into this bear, which was a big beast, so unexpectedly.

We went on, but did not see any more signs of bear, no doubt the shot having scared any that might have been near us, and, making a detour, we returned to where we had left E. and the others. It appears that after we had left them they saw a very large number of bears near us in this alder patch, and putting our heads together and adding up those that we had disturbed, it seemed that there were not less than fourteen bears in the vicinity of those alders.

We imagined that we were fairly close to Alphonse's igloo, but unfortunately Alphonse had described the position of the igloo so badly that we were really on the wrong side of the promontory on which the igloo was; therefore we had to travel the whole way round, going down close to the beach and back to the other side of the creek before we found it—a miserable affair which was quite unserviceable except as a very temporary resting-place.

When we arrived at the igloo it was getting late, after nine o'clock, and although there was still light—the nights were never really dark at that time of the year—there was no sign of Alphonse, nor was there any sign of him the whole night. Mrs. Simons slept inside the igloo and we slept outside. It was very cold, but we managed to keep more or less warm with a good fire made up of driftwood which we found on the beach. Early in the morning we saw what appeared to be a boat on a sandbank, about three miles from where we were camped, and as the light improved we discovered that this was Alphonse sound asleep in the dory, waiting until the tide rose to enable him to get away. He did not reach us until mid-day. We were very thankful to get a good square

meal, having had nothing much to eat since the previous morning.

The following day I went with Andy to another igloo belonging to Alphonse, which was about six or seven miles from our camp and placed practically on the Bering Sea. We took a little food with us and stayed the night in this igloo. A very fine bear was sighted on our journey, but he was a long way off and going in a direction which it would have been unprofitable to follow.

Close to the Bering Sea there are very large banks of black sand, on which we found large quantities of flowers (daisies, etc.) strawberries, and other ground berries. We also saw many wildfowl on the Bering Sea shore; amongst others I saw a fine pair of emperor geese.

We returned next day. E. had gone out after bears, and had not returned by the evening. He came in about midnight, having shot a very fine bear within a couple of miles of our camp. He had now shot his full complement of bears (three) and so far I had only one. There was still another seven days of open season, the season closing on the 1st of July, and I hoped to be able to come across something worth shooting before the season closed.

Andy and I during the next seven days travelled over a good deal of the country, and although we saw bears every day, only on one occasion, except when I shot a bear on the 30th of June, did we get close to any beast that one might reasonably describe as first class.

One day we went up a creek which was one of the tributaries of the Izembek River, having located two

bears from the hill which circled the edge of the plain. These two bears were some three or four miles away from us when first we saw them. One was a light-coloured bear and the other a dark-coloured one. Both were big beasts. The light-coloured bear was nearer to us, and in approaching the position where we had seen the dark one we would be compelled to pass the light bear. The dark-coloured bear was the bigger of the two, or appeared to be at that great distance. Unfortunately, the day was very foggy, that is to say it was foggy in patches, a sort of drifting fog which, when it floated across the plain, blocked out everything from sight for some considerable time.

We made our way through very heavy swamp until we struck the edge of the Izembek River, along which there was a fairly good hard-beaten track, which was made by the bears when they were fishing for salmon during the summer run. Following along this trail, we found that we would pass within half a mile of the light-coloured bear. The bear was feeding in swamp, with the result that it appeared smaller than we subsequently found him to be. In passing him we came to a creek which we could not cross, as it was too deep; so we had to make a long detour to get to the part of the plain where we had seen the darker bear.

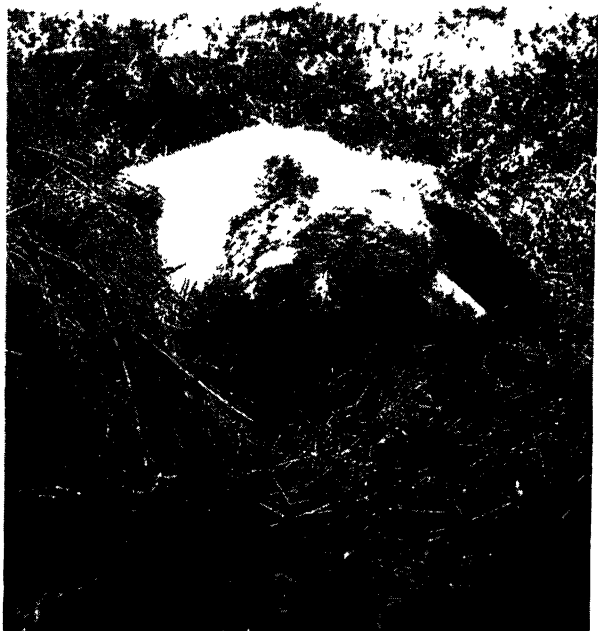
When we finally reached the spot where we had seen this bear we could find no sign of him at all. Beyond where we had been there was a thick patch of fog and it is possible that he might have been in that; but as the day was getting late we decided to go back. When we returned we found the light-coloured bear had come down toward the creek and was lying on a low hummock, which was not more



than 200 yards from the edge of the creek. We had to pass this on our way back, but the bear, which apparently was sleeping, was in such a position that he could not see us, and the wind being in our favour, he also could not scent us.

When we were opposite to where the bear was, we thought it would be a good opportunity to have our lunch and watch the animal. The day was now fine and warm and we sat on the edge of the creek and ate our food. Presently the bear got up, yawned, turned himself round, and lay down again. His head was now towards us and it was only a matter of a few seconds before he spotted us. He looked at us for a long time, and yawned, then he stood up and yawned again, and took a step or two towards us, obviously not at all pleased at being disturbed. He then started to walk very slowly in our direction. Now, he could not possibly come right up to us because there was a deep creek about thirty yards wide between us. The moment he started to walk I said to Andy that surely it was a really big bear. Andy, however, seemed to be undecided on this point and thought it was not worth taking. It was in magnificent fur of an almost pure golden hue.

The bear evidently made up his mind that he would come down and see what were these extraordinary things sitting on the bank of the creek, but he came very slowly, rolling from side to side, and obviously very reluctantly. When he stepped off the hummock he got into swamp, and, having come within 100 yards of us—I had my eyes glued to my glasses and was watching every movement—he stopped, stood up, and had a good look at us.



FEMALE BEAR SHOT ON 11TH JUNE



LARGE MALE BROWN BEAR SHOT ON 30TH JUNE



As he stood up I could plainly see the water dripping off his fore paws. He then started again to walk towards us. Andy said, "You will see he will now circle round and try and get our wind". As a matter of fact he did nothing of the kind; he came steadily on until he was just the other side of the creek from us, where he stopped and turned sideways to us—we were sitting on the bank of the creek with our legs dangling over the edge.

Suddenly the bear, which had been smacking his chops, looked down into the water and took a step as if he intended to swim across to us. It had never occurred to either of us that he would have attempted anything of the sort. I am convinced it was merely curiosity, but as it was too late to do anything but fire at the bear (it would have been bad tactics to have awaited until he was in the water), I jumped to my feet, hurriedly fired at his shoulder, and down he went. He spun around on the ground and I fired again, but I am not sure whether I hit him or not. Scrambling to his feet, a whirling mass of fur, now only intent on getting as far away as possible in the least time from those nasty things on the other side of the creek, he floundered into the long grass through which he had so lately taken his leisurely way, only to be fired at by Andy who had the single-barrel .450. The bear turned a complete somersault at the shot, but I think the bullet failed to find a real billet.

While this was going on I had reloaded. The bear was now perhaps seventy or eighty yards away. I had two shots at him, but did not hit him. Unfortunately, while we had been watching the bear we had not noticed the weather, and to our utmost disgust

and dismay we saw the animal disappear into a patch of fog about 100 yards from us. We could not cross the creek where we were, and it meant a very long detour round to get to the other side. It was now getting on in the afternoon; we were perhaps eight miles from camp, and there was nothing to be done but to go home.

The following morning Andy and I went out. It was then beautifully clear. We picked up the spoor of the bear where he had crossed a small creek, and on a mud flat just beyond his tracks were very plainly visible. He was undoubtedly a big bear. His fore-foot measured 12 inches across, and I think that his pelt would undoubtedly have provided a magnificent trophy. It was unfortunate that I did not make up my mind to shoot him and take my time over it, instead of taking a hurried snap shot when we thought he was going to dive into the creek to get across at us. We tracked the bear for some considerable distance, but I think that he was not dangerously wounded; my first bullet had probably broken up on the heavy muscles of his shoulder. It had obviously not got into the heart cavity.

It was not until the 30th of June, the last day of the open season, that I had the good fortune to get my big bear. We had several times seen bears out in a big swamp to the west of our camp, but although we had tried to get to where these bears were, we had invariably been prevented from doing so by deep swamps or creeks which cut off the approach to the localities where we had seen them.

On the morning of the 30th of June, we saw a bear from the hill-side, at a distance of about three

miles. The bear appeared to be a really big one, and when the sun was shining on his coat he seemed to be in good fur, which was of a reddish-golden hue. He was in such a position that when we got down to the level of the swamp we could not see where he was, so we took a rough bearing on to a hill on the other side of the swamp and started to travel in that direction.

We soon got into serious difficulties; in places the swamp was almost impassable, the ground shaking and quaking at every step, and it seemed quite probable that we should quickly find ourselves out of our depth. However, we managed to struggle along until we got to a point where we thought we must be within about half a mile of the bear. The animal was lying down, but fortunately for us he took it into his head to stand up and slightly alter his position. When he did this we spotted exactly where he was, and although he almost immediately lay down again and became invisible, we were able to locate him.

Still struggling through very bad swamp we came to where we considered we were within forty or fifty yards of the bear. We knew that he would not be lying in the swamp, and, noticing two small patches of hummock grass, we felt sure it was in one of these that he was lying. We thought that he was in the one nearest to us, and moving over in the direction of this grass hummock we suddenly saw the bear get up from the other one, which was about thirty yards away from us. He immediately saw us and stood up on his hind legs. We were still in swamp; that is to say, we were standing in water about a foot deep.

I immediately fired at the bear's chest, which

brought him down to his fore feet very quickly. He did not fall over, but started to shuffle across our front. I fired my second barrel at him, which seemed to have no effect. He still progressed, and then, coming to a small creek, fell into it, but scrambled out on the other side. By this time I had reloaded, and firing two shots, both of which hit him just behind the shoulder, put him down for good. We went over to where he was and I saw before me a very fine specimen of a male Alaska brown bear. He was lying in a nasty patch of swamp grass and his great weight had embedded his body for nearly half its thickness in the swamp. In fact, the place he was in was most unsuitable for the work ahead of us; that was the skinning of the beast and the removal of his pelt. But it was perfectly impossible to remove him in any way, and we decided to get back to camp and get Al. to come with us on the morrow and help remove the hide. This we did. We took some boards with us from the igloo, which enabled us to stand around the bear without gradually sinking deeper and deeper into the swamp while we were skinning it.

Having skinned the bear, we now had to carry his pelt for about two miles through heavy swamp, and it was no mean physical effort to achieve this object. Al. took the hide and stuffed it into his pack-sack and with our help got it on his back and started off. Andy took the load about half-way across the swamp. When we got to the beach we still had about two miles to go, but the going was good and Al. and Andy made light work of their task.

When I got into camp I weighed the pack-sack exactly as it was with the bear pelt in it. The weight

was 125 pounds. The skin, of course, was soaking wet, so we stretched it out on a line and tried to get as much moisture out of it as we could before we salted it.

The next day we packed up the skin and Andy and Al. took it over to Cold Bay.

The following day before the boys returned I fished in the creek below our camp and caught twenty-eight brook trout.

Our hunt was now completed and all that remained to do was to get all our outfit back to Cold Bay and then to King Cove by the dory which Alphonse had brought over from the Cove, and which had been pulled up on to the beach at Cold Bay.

Unfortunately when we arrived at Cold Bay the weather was so bad that it was quite impossible to get out of the bay at all, and we were stuck there for several days. We found that the engine in Alphonse's dory was very considerably out of order; and after all Alphonse's efforts had failed to get one single turn out of the engine, Andy and I took part of it to pieces and found that after cleaning and adjusting the commutator the engine turned over all right. Finally we got away at 7.30 P.M. on the 10th of July and arrived at King Cove about midnight. Alphonse, who fancied himself as a motor engineer, would not leave his engine alone, and, continually fiddling with it, just as we were at the mouth of King Cove it blew up. Fortunately we were in smooth water, and with the help of oars we soon got to the wharf; but had this happened when we were, say, off the mouth of Leonard's Harbour, where there was a strong tide and a considerable sea backed up by a stiff breeze, it is



likely that we never would have made King Cove at all. I do not think I was ever more pleased in my life than when the time came to pay off Alphonse.

We had to remain at King Cove until the 15th of July, when we caught the s.s. *Catherine D.* of the Pacific American Fisheries Company, which was bound for Seattle.

Leaving King Cove at 12.30 A.M. on the 15th of July, we went into Unga on the Shumagin Islands and then across the Gulf of Alaska. We had perfect weather and a very comfortable ship. Cape Spencer was reached about mid-day on the 19th of July in heavy fog. We arrived at Hoonah at 7 o'clock, where I left the ship, E. going on to Bellingham *en route* to New York. I wanted to get to Juneau and from there up to Seward, and hoped to be able to get across from Hoonah by motor boat or launch to Juneau, which is some sixty or seventy miles distant.

I stopped the night at Hoonah, and the following day, with the kind assistance of the superintendent of the Pacific American Fisheries Company, Mr. Simons, obtained a cannery tender and went across to Juneau. Here we had to wait for three days until the s.s. *Alameda* for Seward was due. During these three days we were in Juneau it rained all the time. On the 22nd of July, we caught the *Alameda* and started on our journey for Seward, where we arrived at 2 A.M. on the 27th of July.

This was the end of the first half of my trip, and although I had not filled up the bill as far as brown bears were concerned (one is allowed three bears on a licence), I had got everything that I desired in the way of trophies. It would have been a perfectly

simple matter to have shot three bears the first three days that we were there, but I was anxious to obtain only really good or unique specimens, and the two specimens that I did get were quite everything that I had hoped for. The male bear that I shot at Moffat Cove, Izembek Bay, on the 30th of June, measured as follows: Length between perpendiculars, nose to root of tail, 7 feet 10 inches; height at shoulder between perpendiculars, 4 feet.

The following measurements of the head are of interest: Circumference of snout,  $15\frac{7}{8}$  inches; length from centre of forehead between eyes to end of snout,  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches; circumference of neck, 44 inches; distance between points of ears, outside, 20 inches.

These measurements were of the carcass, not the skin. Skin, measured by Rowland Ward, 9 feet, with no stretching whatsoever.

In an article written by Captain Kleinschmidt in the February 1919 number of *Outdoor Life*, he states that the length of the biggest brown bear he had ever obtained—and it was one of the biggest brown bears he had ever seen—was 8 feet 2 inches. In Captain Radclyffe's article in *Big Game Shooting* (vol. i. Country Life Library of Sport) he gives the measurements of a big brown bear as 7 feet  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches between perpendiculars; so one can safely consider that the bear I obtained at Moffat Cove was well up to the average of really big bears.

The skin of a big bear is often prepared in such a way that the tail is left well above the lower edge of the skin, with the result that the length of the skin appears exceptional. The only measurement that is really of any value is from the snout to the

root of the tail, whether in the flesh or of the cured skin.

Regarding the country in which we hunted in the south-west peninsula of Alaska, there is no doubt that it is *par excellence* the land of the brown bear. The country there is entirely unoccupied except for a very occasional trapper. The game to be found in that locality consists of brown bears, caribou, wolverine, and foxes. We found on one occasion what we believed to be the track of a wolf. So far as we knew, there was no possibility of there being any dogs near, and the pronounced dew-claw seemed to indicate that this track must have been made by a wolf. As we only saw one track, on such evidence it is of course not well to dogmatise; but the track was unmistakably made by an animal which could only have been a dog or a wolf, and it is possible that there may still be some few wolves left in that part of the country.

I was much struck by the phenomenon of the colour phase which seems to predominate to some extent in that country amongst all the game. We saw, as I have already stated, many bears, but undoubtedly the predominating colour was a reddish-brown to yellow hue. The caribou were light in colour, much lighter than those we saw later on in the Hartman River district. We saw a few foxes and they were all straw-coloured. We saw two wolverines, both of which were very light in colour, and approximated the colour of the foxes. Two or three porcupines were seen, and they also were of the straw colour, which made them look much like the withered grass which was to be seen in great quantities all over the country.

This is a matter of some interest in relation to the question of protective coloration, which some naturalists advocate as being one of the provisions of Nature to meet the difficulties under which wild game exists. In this case it seems to be that the colour phase is in keeping with the general coloration of the country rather than with any idea of protecting animals from natural enemies. One cannot imagine that in that country the brown bear has any enemy except man; and it is unreasonable to suppose that any colour phase could be the result of the persecution that wild animals have received from man during the last hundred or two hundred years. I will even go one further and say that I noticed ptarmigan were lighter in colour in their spring and summer plumage than I should have expected.

We had a very peculiar incident in connection with ptarmigan, which I think is worthy of record. One evening, returning from a search for bears, we stumbled across a hen ptarmigan and a large brood of chicks. In this country the foxes are a very great menace to the ptarmigan; we found many ptarmigans' eggs which had been broken and many nests which had been disturbed, which was undoubtedly the work of foxes. In this instance, directly the hen ptarmigan was disturbed by us she left the chicks and fluttered away, making the usual pretence of being disabled. There was nothing extraordinary about this, but after she had fluttered a little distance away she disturbed the cock ptarmigan, which happened to be in the vicinity and which joined her and carried on the same pretence of being disabled, for some yards, keeping a short distance ahead of us. Presently,

when we were perhaps thirty to forty yards from where we had originally disturbed the hen, she gave up her shamming and flew back to where the chicks had been left, but the cock bird turned round and attacked us. He did not make good his attack, that is to say, he did not actually touch either of us (Andy and myself), but he came so close to us that we naturally made a demonstration to shoo him away. It was rather a peculiar incident, I think, because the cock bird could scarcely be supposed to have the maternal instinct.

There is one point that I should like to suggest before I close this chapter: it appears to me that the land at the south-western end of the Alaskan Peninsula—which I think I shall not be found fault with if I say is of little value for cultivation—should be retained as a sanctuary or reservation for the Alaska brown bear and the Grant caribou. It is unquestionably a fact that the large fauna of the world is passing away, and this large fauna will undoubtedly only be preserved for future generations in sanctuaries or wild life refuges. It must be apparent to all who take an interest in the large fauna of the world and who have travelled, or who have received information from reliable observers who have travelled, that the next forty or fifty years are bound to be very critical ones for the remaining large fauna of this earth.

The Alaska brown bear is one of the finest of the big animals left. It is undoubtedly a magnificent beast, which should be preserved as far as possible from the extermination which is bound to be its ultimate fate if it is not carefully conserved. I have already said that I do not believe that the brown bear has such a bad and nasty nature that it should be

made an outlaw and denied protection. I think that it has every right to be preserved in exactly the same way as other mammals are being preserved in other parts of the United States and the world. I am sure that if this question is considered by the game conservationists of America, when they come to the permanent preservation of the Alaska brown bear they will find no better place for preservation than that portion of the Alaska Peninsula which lies to the extreme south-west.<sup>1</sup>

When I was in Juneau I met a wise person who asked me if I had been down to the Alaska Peninsula hunting brown bears. I said I had. I was asked how many brown bears I had shot and replied that I had shot two. He then asked why I had not shot more. I explained that I had not shot more, not because I could not have done so, but because I did not find exactly what I wanted to shoot. The wise person expressed great horror at this and said that it was impossible to understand anybody taking the view that I did of the killing of animals which "they"—I presume the residents of Alaska—wanted exterminated because of the enormous damage they did. It was suggested that I should ask all my friends—presumably Englishmen—to come to Alaska and shoot the

<sup>1</sup> Note from *Outdoor Life*, September 1926: "We are glad that such a noted big-game hunter, traveller, and conservationist as Mr. Hubback should come out so strongly in favour of better protection for the big brown bear, and particularly that he should advocate a sanctuary for their breeding and propagation at the end of the Alaska Peninsula. We believe that the present Alaskan Game Commission can do much in this direction. A step in the right direction has already been taken in the present Alaskan game bill, which limits the kill to three and closes the season from the 21st of June to the 31st of August.—EDITOR."

brown bears until they were finished. I retorted that if we did this, then when all the bears were finished they would never have the pleasure of meeting us again! But I am afraid this wise person did not pay much attention to anything that I said and that he was firmly convinced that the brown bear was only fit for extermination. With such misguided opinions prevailing it is difficult to get a fair hearing for a beast which is probably no more vicious than any other large wild animal, but whose pluck, which at times may get it into trouble, should really be the admiration of those who appear to be unable to appreciate the strenuous efforts that wild game have to make to keep their place in the sun.



VALLEY OF SKWENTNA RIVER





## CHAPTER V

### THE SKWENTNA RIVER AND IDITAROD TRAIL

#### THE SONG OF THE CAMP FIRE

Now a smudge of wiry willows on the weary Kuskokwim.

Always, always God's great open: lo! I burn with keener light

In the corridors of silence, in the vestibules of night:

'Mid the ferns and grasses gleaming, was there ever gem so bright?

R. W. SERVICE.

DESPITE the fact of our arrival at Seward in the small hours of the morning, there were many of the inhabitants on the wharf, and we had no difficulty in finding conveyances to take us up to the Sexton Hotel. Here I met my old friend Mr. Sexton, who did not appear to have suffered in any way by the passage of time since I had last seen him three years before.

The next day we spent at Seward, re-salting the bear-skins and hanging them up in an empty shop house adjacent to the Sexton Hotel, where I wished to leave them until my return from the north-west. The trains to Anchorage only ran from Seward three times a week, so we arranged to leave on the following day, the 29th of July. I had been discussing with Andy the ways and means of getting into the country

near Rainy Pass, which was our objective, but Andy, not having been into that part of the country before, suggested that we should wait until we arrived at Anchorage and then glean what information we could about the route we proposed to follow.

From Nancy, a station on the Alaska Railway north of Anchorage, the winter trail over which the mails are carried by dog sledges starts for Iditarod, a mining centre on the upper waters of the Kuskokwim River. This trail during the summer is practically impassable because a great part of the country through which it passes is swampy and consequently unsuitable for pack horses. I knew that I should have to do part of my transport by pack horses and had previously written to Andy from England on this subject, but Andy had been unable to find any persons willing to rent out pack horses for the journey into the country where we wished to go. I thought this rather peculiar at the time, but realised after the experiences we went through that it was a hundred to one against any horses which were taken into that country in the fall being brought out alive.

We had a very interesting journey to Anchorage. I had not previously travelled along the Alaska Railway for more than about twenty miles, and was anticipating enjoying the fine scenery that was a feature of the rough country which the railway passes over when crossing the watershed, down to Cook's Inlet, where Anchorage was situated. There were some very fine trestle bridges which we crossed, in one place a large glacier coming down so close to the track that one could almost have thrown a biscuit from the carriage window on to the glacier.

After we had left the mountains and were skirting along Turnagain Arm, the slopes of the mountains on the opposite side of the arm which ran up fairly steeply from the water's edge were one blaze of crimson from the fireweed, which was in full bloom.

We arrived at Anchorage in the afternoon and made our way up to the Anchorage Hotel, where I had obtained reservations for myself, Andy Simons, and Al. Peel. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Reed, who are the proprietors of the hotel, made us exceptionally comfortable during our stay at Anchorage.

We had not brought Mrs. Simons with us on this journey as our cook, because Andy anticipated that we should probably have a pretty rough time of it; and although Mrs. Simons was quite capable of holding her own under any difficulties, we thought it would be as well to leave her behind. Al. Peel, who was an expert cook, generally acted in this capacity when he was in camp.

The following morning I started to make inquiries to get some idea of what was before us. Andy had introduced me to a man named Ben Krattcer, who had come up in the train with us, and who, Andy informed me, was a good horse wrangler. Ben took my fancy immediately. He was obviously a tough nut who, provided he knew his job, would, I felt sure, be an acquisition to the party. After having questioned Ben regarding his qualifications and inclinations, I asked him if he thought he could help in the purchase of horses for our trip. He said he would be very willing to do anything required and would like to go into the Kuskokwim country with us. We agreed on all the essential points, and Ben became one of the party.

At Anchorage I met a man named Al. Lind, who was able to give me some information regarding the country we had to travel over, but he did not know much about the hunting possibilities, nor had he been into the Hartman River country, which was really our Mecca.

But Al. Lind told me that there was a man in Anchorage named Charlie Smith who had been trapping or prospecting in the very country which we wished to reach, and Al. said he would try and find Charlie and bring him to the hotel. In the meantime Andy and Ben were making cautious inquiries regarding the possibilities of buying some horses for our trip. We had decided that we must take three horses at least, and it seemed to be impossible to get word of any horses that would be of the slightest use to us which were for sale in or near Anchorage.

We had much information given us regarding horses for sale by persons interested more in the sale of the horses than in our welfare. In fact, I think certain persons in Anchorage thought they would be able to dispose of questionable horses to us at a fancy price rather than get rid of them in the proper place—the knacker's yard. However Ben, who had handled horses for many years in Wyoming, had no intention of having anything put across him by an Alaskan, and after several disappointments—that is to say, arrangements which did not materialise—we managed to get one good, serviceable horse at Anchorage. During the inquiries which were being made by Andy he heard that a small farmer up the railway above Nancy had two horses for sale, and I sent Andy and Ben up to this place to inspect these

horses, with instructions to buy them and bring them down to Anchorage if they seemed suitable.

In the meantime I had been busy ordering provisions for our trip. Messrs. Brown & Hawkins, who have a large store at Anchorage, a firm with which I had done business on previous occasions at Seward, supplied me with everything that I required. Mr. Brown gave a great deal of personal attention to my order and did me really well.

One day Al. Lind brought Charlie Smith to see me and we had a long pow-wow over the trip ahead of us. Smith knew the country thoroughly and was not at all sanguine that we could get there with horses. This seemed rather a facer, but I hoped we would be able to get over the difficulties which Smith disclosed to us. He told me at this time of the year the trail from Nancy to Susitna, the station on the Susitna River, a distance of about twenty-five miles, was possibly passable for horses which were travelling light, but that the trail from the other side of the Susitna River to the Skwentna Crossing was certainly not passable for horses, as a great deal of swamp had to be negotiated. He said that he thought from the Skwentna Crossing Road House to the Happy River Road House, a distance of about fifty miles, the trail might be negotiated by unloaded horses. From Happy River Road House to Anderson's Road House, just below Rainy Pass, a distance of thirty miles, Smith said that we could use our animals as pack horses.

I was quite impressed with the way Smith gave me this information. He obviously knew what he was talking about, and I decided to lay my plans accord-

ingly. What we were up against was this: We could take horses from Anchorage to Nancy by rail, and from Nancy to Susitna Station by trail, but the horses would have to travel light over the trail. From Susitna Station to the Skwentna Crossing we would have to take the horses by some route other than the trail. This resolved itself into taking them by motor launch or boat up the river between these two points.

Smith, who had just come down from the Skwentna Crossing, told me that Jack Lean, who was an old friend of Andy's, and whom I had met on my previous visit to Seward, was up there catching salmon for his winter supply.

The two owners of the Skwentna Road House, MacIlray and Rimmer, were working in conjunction with Jack. Smith said that Jack Lean had a flat-bottomed boat which he thought we could obtain from Jack and in which we could transport all our stores up the Skwentna River to Happy River. Smith also said that he thought Jack Lean, who was the proprietor of Anderson's Road House in Rainy Pass, was very shortly going up with his winter supply of stores and that he thought Jack could go with us and make a trip with our stores before he used his boat for his own business.

It now remained to make arrangements to get our stores from Anchorage to Susitna Station, and to obtain a launch big enough to enable us to undertake this work and also to transport from Susitna Station to the Skwentna Crossing Road House, if possible, our three horses. This seemed a difficult thing to do, because, although there were several small launches,

we could not find one which would be able to accommodate our horses. I inquired from the railway administration if it would be possible to hire from them a large flat-bottomed barge which they had in their yard but which had been dragged up and placed on the grill. Apparently it would have been possible to come to some agreement regarding this, but the figure asked for the hire of this barge was so high that I looked around for some other means of transport.

At this time I was fortunate enough to meet Captain J. Johnston, the owner of a large motor boat which had powerful oil engines and which was of a sufficiently shallow draught to enable the boat to negotiate the Skwentna River, if not quite up to the Skwentna Crossing Road House, at any rate within a few miles of it. Captain Johnston was under contract to take the mails from Anchorage to Susitna Station, but I was able to arrange a special trip which would enable me to get from Anchorage with my stores to Susitna and from there with the addition of my horses to Skwentna Road Crossing; but it would be impossible to load all three horses on the launch at the same time, so I arranged with Captain Johnston that he should make two trips from Susitna to the Skwentna.

I was unable to fix a date with Captain Johnston until I had completed the purchase of my horses; but the day after I had seen Johnston I received a wire from Andy, saying that he would be down on the following afternoon's train with two horses which he had purchased. Andy duly turned up, but our outfit was still incomplete. Although Andy had succeeded in buying horses, he had been unable to get pack



saddles, and I obtained these through the good offices of one of the railway officials.

All this had taken some days, and it was not until the 6th of August that Al. Peel and Ben left by train with the three horses for Nancy, where they would leave the railway and strike the trail for Susitna Station. We allowed them three days to cover the twenty-five miles of trail, which we thought would be more than ample time. We left in the J. J., Captain Johnston's boat, at 10 P.M. on the 8th of August, for the Susitna River, with sufficient stores for two months. I took Al. Lind along because we should require at least three men for the boat, which we would have to tow for fifty miles up the Skwentna River; Ben and Al. Peel would have to devote their time to looking after the horses. I was counting on being able to obtain the services of Jack Lean at the Skwentna Crossing. With Al. Peel and Ben to take care of the horses, and Andy, Jack, and Al. Lind to handle the boat, we hoped to be able to arrive in due course at Happy River Road House with our horses and stores. I engaged Al. Lind for the trip up to the Happy River. He was reputed to be a good boatman; I knew that Andy and Jack were efficient in that capacity.

We arrived at Susitna Station at 8 A.M. on the 9th of August, but although Al. Peel and Ben had then been two full days and probably another half-day on the trail from Nancy, they did not turn up until seven o'clock at night. The trail was apparently in very poor shape, and in several places the horses, although travelling without anything heavier on their backs than their pack saddles, had been bogged, and much time had been spent in getting them free.



"BROWNIE" AFTER HAVING JUMPED OVERBOARD



"BROWNIE" AND HIS HORSE BOX



SUSITNA STATION AND THE LAUNCH J. J.



I slept the night of the 9th in Mr. Healy's house at Susitna Station. He was in charge of H. W. Nagley's store, and was extremely kind and helpful while I was there. The Susitna Road House, which is run during the winter months by Mrs. Johnston, was not yet open.

The following morning we left Susitna at 5.20 with two horses. Al. Peel remained behind at Susitna with the third horse. One of the horses, a brown one, which we of course christened Brownie, gave us endless trouble; the other horse, a sorrel, did not seem to mind the journey on the launch in any way, but Brownie appeared to become seasick, or possibly it may have been the fumes from the exhaust of the oil engine which he did not like. The horses were tethered at the stern of the launch, and after Brownie had made desperate efforts to climb on to the roof of the launch and to get clear of the ropes by which he was tethered he finally managed to throw himself overboard. We were in a rather dangerous part of the river at the time, with a current running at a speed of at least four knots, but we had to tow Brownie to the bank, despite the fact that during the process he was being strangled and more or less drowned at the same time. However, after a great deal of trouble, we got him on to the bank in an exhausted condition, and then once more on to the stern of the launch. The other horse had fortunately behaved very well during this business.

We had to make for the nearest sand spit because it was obviously impossible for us to continue our journey until we had made some arrangement which would ensure that Brownie would be unable to carry

on his frantic efforts to get away from the launch. We decided that the only thing to do was to hog-tie him and carry him in this way up to MacDougal on the Yentna River. Ben, who was an expert at this sort of work, soon had Brownie tied up in such a way that he could move neither fore nor hind feet, and in this ignominious position he was dragged on board the launch and transported to MacDougal. For eight hours Brownie was subjected to this treatment, but on arrival at MacDougal, when we cut him loose he very quickly shook himself free of his stiffness and commenced feeding on the grass and clover which he found on the river bank.

MacDougal had been an important station some years ago, when there was much mining in the vicinity, but it had seen its best days and there are now barely half a dozen residents there.

In the evening I caught a fine fresh-run salmon on a spinning bait; also some rainbow trout and white fish with bait. MacDougal was well known as an excellent place for rainbow trout. I also caught one grayling.

The following morning we hunted around and found some lumber and nails, and made a "horse box" for Brownie, which in due course we placed, with Brownie, on the stern of the launch. Brownie was unable to do anything in this "box" except remain where he was, and we had no further trouble with him on the launch.

At 7 P.M., having been for some time negotiating the Skwentna River, a tributary of the Yentna, which it joins a mile or so above MacDougal, we found that we could go no farther, and pulling in to



CAMP NEAR THE SKWENTNA CROSSING



TOWING OUR BOAT UP THE SKWENTNA RIVER



the left bank we soon selected a suitable place for a camp.

The following morning the J. J. returned to Susitna with Ben, to bring up the third horse. This horse had a white face and consequently was christened "Baldy". Al. Lind remained in camp and Andy and I went upstream to a spot where the previous year Charlie Smith had made a cache. From this spot there was a trail which ran up to the Skwentna Crossing Road House, and we thought that if we could cut a trail from our temporary camp to Smith's cache the horses would be able to get up to the road house without much difficulty. The distance from our camp to Smith's cache was under two miles. The mosquitoes and flies were very bad, and I used my head net. We found old tracks of moose. There were quantities of berries, salmon berries and raspberries being in great profusion.

It was now necessary for Andy and Al. Lind to go up to the Skwentna Crossing to get Jack Lean's boat, so next morning they left me and went up the newly cut trail toward the road house. They did not return that evening.

Next day the J. J. arrived about 1 P.M. with Al. Peel, Ben, and the third horse. Johnston returned with his launch to Susitna *en route* for Anchorage. Andy and Al. Lind arrived about 5 P.M. with Jack Lean and his boat, so we were now ready to make a real start on our long journey up the Skwentna River.

On the morning of the 15th of August we loaded up all our stores into Jack Lean's boat and poled up the river to the Skwentna Crossing Road House.



Al. Peel and Ben took the three horses over the trail that Andy had cut to Smith's cache; from there they would follow the old trail which joined the main Iditarod trail at the back of the Skwentna Crossing Road House.

Our camp was not as close to the road house as we had thought, and it took us a good stiff day's poling to reach our destination. We found the house occupied by MacIlray and Rimmer, two typical Alaska sourdoughs.

A word about the Iditarod trail. In the district of Iditarod there are several mining propositions. At the time of my visit the only way that these camps could be reached during the winter was by the trail which had been cut from Nancy to Iditarod. The trail, which was over 200 miles in length, was used only during the winter, and along this trail were several road houses, which during the summer were closed up. MacIlray and Rimmer, the proprietors of the Skwentna Crossing Road House, had been busy catching salmon and curing the fish for use during their winter sojourn. The next road house, which was known as Mountain Climbers, was still unoccupied. Again, the next one at Happy River, and the road house near Rainy Pass, Anderson's, were about to be occupied by Jack Lean, who had as a partner in this venture an old resident of Alaska named Charlie Schultz. The use of this trail would be a practical impossibility without the services of these road houses, and those men who elect to live in them during the winter, and who serve the travellers who pass over the trail, are deserving of the greatest praise for their enterprise and hardiness.

I was questioning Andy one day about the running of the mails over these winter trails. He had done work of this sort at one time, and he told me that one winter he ran the mails from Seward to Hope, a mining town on Turnagain Arm. I asked Andy how one man could manage to do work of that sort by himself. He admitted that it was a tough proposition, and told me that at times when the dogs would get out of hand and possibly upset the sled with all the mail bags, etc., down some steep hill-side, and then start to fight among themselves, it took all one man's time to deliver the mails on schedule. Andy wound up his story by saying that this mail business was "a real man's job". I fully believed him.

The really heavy traffic over the Iditarod trail would probably take place toward the end of October, when the miners would be likely to go "outside"—that is, to the United States—for the winter. The road houses for a month would be very busy, and after that they would have very few travellers passing through until the following year, before the winter broke up, when the miners would be going back again.

We slept the night at Skwentna Crossing Road House and the following day started the really difficult part of our journey up the Skwentna River. MacIlray told me that he thought it would probably take us eight to nine days to get to Happy River. It was about fifty miles, and the river, which was still very heavily charged with silt from the melting of the snow in the upper reaches, was running at a pace of from four to five knots in many places. What we had to do—I say we, but I am afraid I did

not do very much of it myself—was to tow this flat-bottomed boat containing about 2000 pounds weight of stores, outfit, and provisions, for fifty miles up this river.

The first day from the road house we made only about five miles. I wrote in my diary the following: "Had pretty stiff day". We camped on a sand bar about a mile above the mouth of the Chusalitna River. The next day we made about six miles. There was much driftwood and the river was in flood. Andy and Jack did most of the towing; Al. Lind seemed to think that he was an expert with the pole in the stern of the boat and did not spend much time in the water. During the night we had heavy rain, which did not altogether contribute to our comfort. The following day we again made only about five miles, most of the towing having to be done by walking in the water, and again we slept on a sand spit. Four miles was our journey the next day, due to much driftwood and the necessity of continually crossing the river, which, taking into consideration the strong current, invariably meant that we lost fifty to a hundred yards during the operation.

The following evening we camped near the mouth of Hayes River, a large tributary which comes in from the south, on the right bank of the Skwentna. Leaving Hayes River, we proceeded about seven miles upstream. This took us a day and a half, when we stopped at the mouth of a small tributary of the Skwentna, where Jack said there was a very good chance of coming across bear. We had a magnificent view of Mount McKinley and Mount Foraker, which, although a hundred miles distant from where

we were, stood out in marvellous clearness far above the surrounding landscape.

Having made our camp, I went down to the mouth of the stream, where I saw dozens of salmon making their way up the creek. They were nearly spent and were a horrible sight, with patches of red and disease much in evidence. We also saw large numbers of bear tracks. Although this was the close season for bear, I had a special permit from Dr. Nelson to try and obtain specimens of the brown or grizzly bear for the American National Collection at Washington. I fished for grayling with a small spinner and was successful in catching ten fine fish, which we cooked for our dinner and enjoyed very much.

Toward evening I went up the small stream with Jack to try and come across a bear. Unfortunately the scrub on the sides of the stream was very thick and it was difficult to move about quietly. The place was one mass of bear tracks, and there is no doubt that there was a large number of bears in the vicinity. As we got farther up the stream we found that we could follow along the river-bed itself in many places, and it was astonishing the number of salmon that were struggling to make their way up the river. Jack informed me that at the head of this river there was a large shallow lake, which was a favourite spawning ground for salmon, and it was no doubt to this lake that the salmon were trying to find their way.

We were very close to bear on several occasions; in fact, once we distinctly smelt bear close to us, but we were unable to see them in the dense undergrowth which grew on the banks of this stream.

The farther up we went the more salmon we saw, until they were practically blocking the stream. This seemed rather extraordinary, but the solution was soon found to this phenomenon. The beaver had played a very dirty trick on the salmon in this river. We came to a place where the beavers had entirely dammed the stream, and had lifted the level of the water at least six feet. The salmon, therefore, when they came to the dam, found themselves at the end of their journey, being cut off from their regular spawning ground. There was no room for them all to spawn in the small river they had followed, which their instinct had told them would take them to the lake, so undoubtedly most of the salmon which went up that river were unable to carry out the scheme that Nature intended for them. The beavers, probably not more than a dozen at the outside, to enable themselves to survive the winter had dammed a river by which they prevented thousands of salmon from reaching their spawning ground and from propagating their species.

There were many beavers all through this country where we were travelling; in fact, Al. Peel and Ben had endless trouble with the horses, due to land that normally would have been dry having been flooded by the activities of the beavers which had dammed up small streams serving to drain the country through which the trail passed. We made our way back to camp shortly after dusk.

I might mention that when we came back in October Jack Lean showed me at Happy River Road House the skin of a bear that he had shot in this very locality on his return journey to the Skwentna Cross-



THROUGH THE CANYON, SKWENTNA RIVER



LUNCH ON THE BANK, SKWENTNA RIVER

And taking advantage of the smoke to keep off the midges



ing Road House, after we had gone into the hunting country. He had better luck than we had, because he caught this bear out on a sand spit just below where we had our camp. It was a fine specimen of a dark grizzly bear.

The following morning we left camp at 9.15 and almost immediately entered a huge canyon, through which the Skwentna River flowed. We made about five miles that day and camped two miles inside the canyon. In places the going through the canyon was easy, the water being deep and consequently not very swift-flowing; but in other parts where there were many rocks to negotiate we had a pretty difficult job. In the middle of the canyon, on a large pile of driftwood, partially covered with sand, we found the remains of a moose, with quite a fair pair of antlers. It had probably died during the late winter and the carcass had been washed on to this pile of driftwood. No bears appeared to have visited the carcass.

We saw the fresh spoor of a big bear in the canyon, but did not see any signs of the bear itself.

The next day, the 24th of August, we got through the canyon and proceeded two miles beyond, where we camped on an extremely stony sand spit. There were not many spruce trees in the vicinity, the branches of which we, wherever possible, cut off and used for our beds, but in this case we had to pile grass on the stones and sleep as well as we could on this material. As Jack said, "At any rate, we had solid comfort".

We were now getting near our destination, the Happy River, and about mid-day, when we were within a couple of miles of the mouth of Happy River, I left the boat and crossed to the left bank of the



Skwentna, where Jack informed me I should find the trail. I had had quite enough of wading in the ice-cold muddy water of the Skwentna River. I soon found the trail and on the trail found the tracks of horses. I knew, therefore, that Al. Peel and Ben were ahead of us. Following the trail for some two miles I struck the river, and still following the horses' track I presently observed a wisp of smoke and the next moment saw Al. Peel come out of a small tent which he had erected. Al. and I both made the same remark: "How thin you look". We had had a pretty tough time coming up the river, and Al. and Ben had had an equally tough time with the horses. They had only arrived the day before, having taken nine days to cover about fifty miles of trail. At one place they had had to leave the plain entirely and take to some hilly ground through which they had cut a fresh trail. They blamed the beavers to a great extent for the troubles they had experienced.

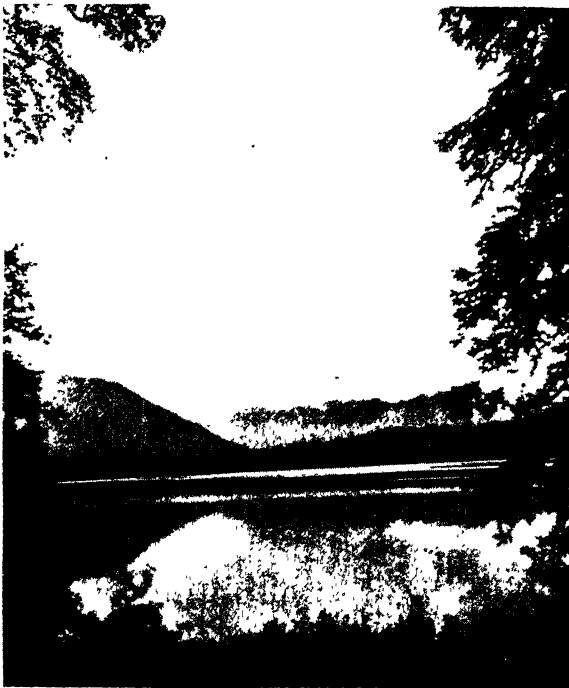
I fished for grayling in the Happy River and caught five fine fish. We had a rest the next day, and, fishing again, I caught a few grayling.

Happy River Road House appeared to be about 900 feet above sea-level—that is to say, from the reading I obtained from my aneroid. The weather was settled at the time and probably the reading was fairly accurate.

On the 27th day of August we parted company with Jack Lean and Al. Lind, who were taking the boat back to Skwentna Road Crossing, and we proceeded on our journey with the three horses and part of our stores. The idea was to use the Happy River Road House as our main base and take up with us



ON THE TRAIL NEAR HUGHES LAKE



HARDING LAKE



three good loads, which would be between 150 and 200 pounds per horse. When we had got into the hunting country we would send the horses back with Al. and Ben for more stores. Then, so soon as we had any trophies to send out, the horses would go out once more and if necessary bring up more stores. By doing this we hoped to be able to carry out our transport without any very great difficulty. Anything that we could get to Happy River Road House could at the end of our hunt be transported by boat without any difficulty.

I had undertaken to try and get for the National Museum at Washington specimens of bears and caribou from the Rainy Pass country. I also hoped to get specimens of moose, caribou, and mountain sheep for myself. In addition, I had a special permit from Dr. Nelson to enable me to shoot a group of white sheep for the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. If I was successful in obtaining all that I hoped to, we would have several loads of trophies to transport to Happy River; and with only three horses there was every reason to make as great haste as we could with the transport arrangements.

For about three miles from Happy River Road House we had an excellent trail, passing through a spruce forest. We climbed steadily and at the third mile came to a large lake, which we had to skirt, the actual trail crossing the ice when the lake was frozen. Apparently this lake had no name, although it was very many acres in extent and quite large enough to have a name. So for purposes of identification and reference whenever we alluded to this trail I called it Harding Lake.

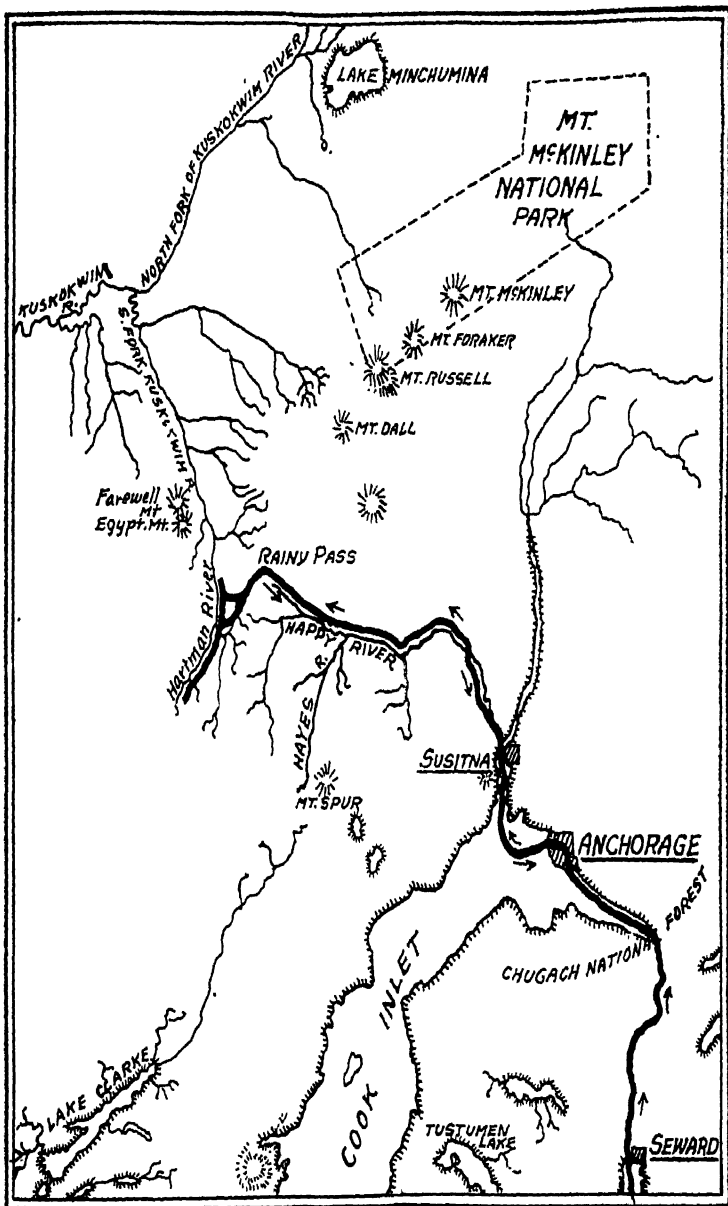
From Harding Lake to the seventh mile we had a fairly good trail, but there were a few places where it was boggy and we had some difficulty with the horses. At the seventh mile we came across another lake, which we christened Hughes Lake. This lake was about 1600 feet above sea-level.

Flies and mosquitoes were very bad and annoying and we found head nets a necessity.

We made fourteen miles that day and camped at Canyon Creek. There was a little rain in the evening. We saw moose tracks near this camp. There was very heavy rain during the night, which continued the whole of the following day, and we had to remain in camp.

The next morning it was still dull and drizzly, but we decided to push on to Anderson's Road House, which was about sixteen miles along the trail. Anderson's Road House, which is eight and three-quarter miles from the summit of Rainy Pass, has been a haven of rest for many travellers, and we hoped to start our hunting from near that place. On our way up we saw two caribou, and also when near Anderson's Road House we saw a bear and some more caribou. The caribou were much larger than those we had seen in south-western Alaska and were obviously the woodland variety. I think the bear was a black bear; anyway, he was a long way from us and it was not worth while considering the possibility of going after him.

It rained again all the afternoon, and the last part of our journey to Anderson's was anything but pleasant. Close to the road house we had to wade Happy River, but soon found ourselves in a good, comfort-



GENERAL MAP OF THE COUNTRY, SHOWING ROUTE TAKEN FROM SEWARD TO THE HARTMAN RIVER COUNTRY



able house, despite the fact that it had been unoccupied all the summer. In this part of the country the road houses during the summer, although unoccupied, are left open. The reason for this is that if you shut up a house these big brown or grizzly bears will, due perhaps to their great curiosity, break into the house and in doing so will probably pull your windows and doors to pieces; so it is found advisable to leave the windows and doors open to let the bears go in and out at their sweet will without having to pull your house to pieces to enable them to do so.

The small ground squirrels, known locally as "parkies", had got into part of one of the caches and had made a mess of the flour and meal that had been left there, but although the house had been left entirely at the mercy of the bears, possibly because they could get in without any obstruction, they had never gone in at all.

We slept at Anderson's Road House, and the next day, following along the trail to Rainy Pass for three or four miles, we turned off to the left and, entering a valley, proceeded toward the source of the Happy River.

When I was in Anchorage I had made a small sketch plan of this part of the country, from the information given me by Charlie Smith, which proved to be wonderfully accurate and of considerable use to us; in fact, Charlie Smith had been able to convey to me a very good idea of what the country was like.

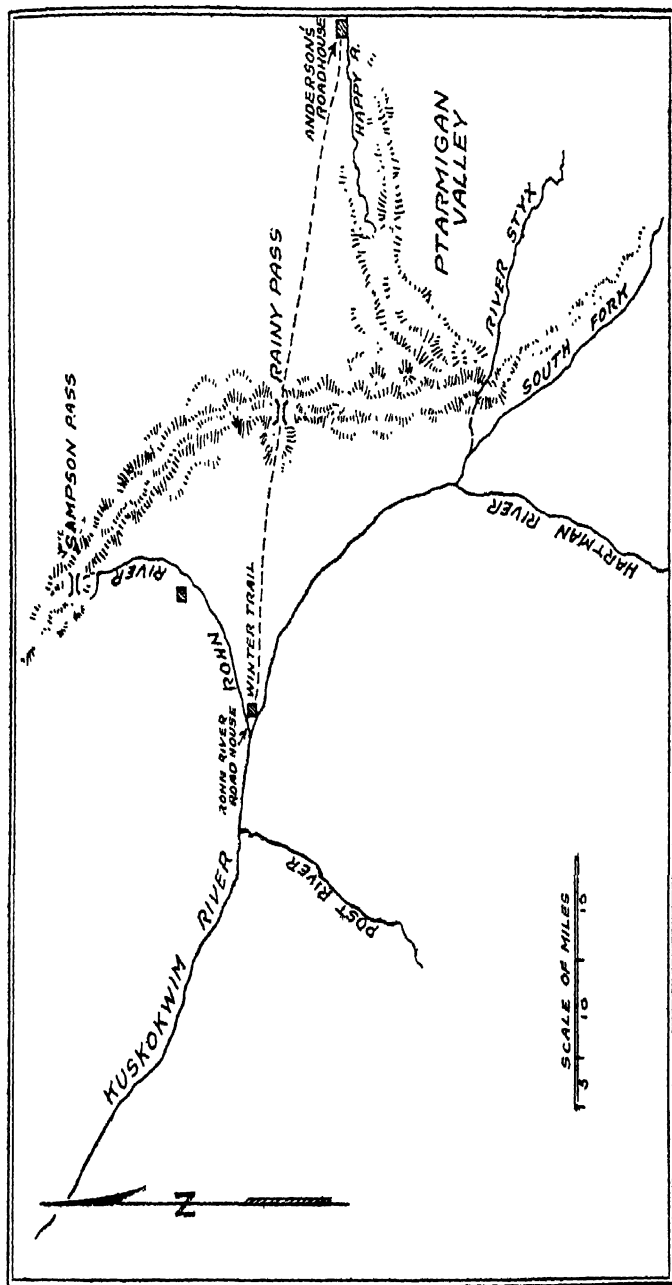
Between the tail end of the Alaska Range and the south fork of the Kuskokwim River and the Skwentna River there is a wide valley known as Ptarmigan Valley. It was into this valley that we now took our



way. The Happy River rises in a flat saddle about half-way through Ptarmigan Valley; that is to say, about ten miles from Anderson's Road House. On the other side of the saddle there is a small stream which runs into the River Styx, which is a tributary of the south fork of the Kuskokwim; in fact, this saddle is the true divide between the valleys of the Kuskokwim and the Susitna.

We camped six miles from Anderson's Road House on a creek which we christened Rock Cony Creek, because there was a large rock slide at the back of our camp which was the home of many rock conies. The weather was still fine and my aneroid made the height of this camp 3150 feet above sea-level.

We were now well above the timber line, and in a country which we hoped would provide us with good sport, though still some way from the Hartman River. The small sketch plan printed will show roughly the position of the Hartman River, the south fork of the Kuskokwim, and the River Styx. My original intention was to go into the Hartman River to hunt, but owing to the delay at Seattle, which had thrown me back about three weeks for the whole of my trip, I had arrived in Rainy Pass country nearly a month later than I anticipated. We were now well on towards the fall and I had to go very cautiously with my transport because we might easily get into country which would be extremely difficult to get out of. We had heard that about six miles from Anderson's Road House there was a small creek which ran into the mountains that lay between Ptarmigan Valley and the south fork of the Kuskokwim. At the head of this creek a prospector some years previously had



SKETCH MAP OF THE DISTRICT IN WHICH WE HUNTED IN FAR WESTERN ALASKA

Made on information supplied by Charlie Smith





SKWENTNA RIVER AND VALLEY OF HAYES RIVER

seen a large number of white sheep (*Ovis dalli*). We presumed that the place where we had camped on Rock Cony Creek was the creek referred to by the prospector who had seen the sheep, so we decided to remain a few days in the vicinity and hunt around for sheep in the mountains at the back of our camp.

We had camped early because it was necessary for Al. and Ben to take the horses back to Anderson's Road House that afternoon and leave the following day for Happy River to bring up more stores. That night Andy and I turned in, realising that we had now arrived at our real hunting ground, and anticipated coming to close quarters very shortly with some of the game we had come so far to find.

## CHAPTER VI

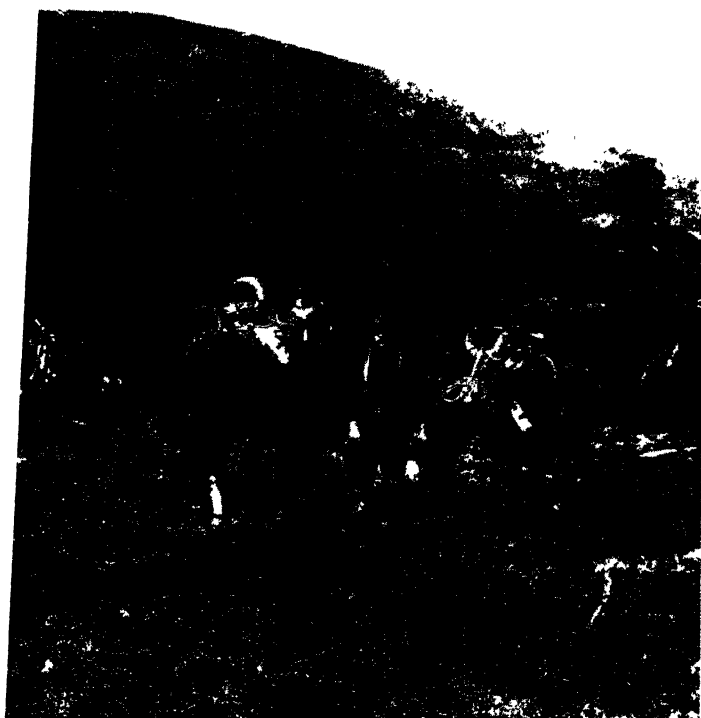
### *OVIS DALLI*

Do you know the world's white roof-tree—do you know that windy rift  
Where the baffling mountain-eddies chop and change?  
Do you know the long day's patience, belly-down on frozen drift,  
While the head of heads is feeding out of range?  
It is there that I am going, where the boulders and the snow lie,  
With a trusty, nimble tracker that I know.  
I have sworn an oath, to keep it on the Horns of Ovis Poli,  
And the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

BEFORE Al. Peel had left us the previous afternoon he had drawn my attention to some fresh snow on the peaks at the back of our camp. We were still in the month of August and it was undoubtedly very early for snow; we thought that it might possibly indicate an early winter. We were now in country well above the timber line; in fact, in the latitude that we had now reached—that is, about 62° north—the timber begins to disappear at about 2000 feet above sea-level.

On the morning of the 31st of August, Andy and I followed up Rock Cony Creek to prospect the country for sheep. So far we had seen no signs of any. The valley mounted steeply behind our camp and for a distance of three or four miles cut a huge gash in the mountains which divided Ptarmigan Valley from the valley of the south fork of the Kuskokwim.



BEN AND HORSES WITH SHEEP TROPHIES





About two miles behind our camp there was a very large rock slide, and while we were crossing this slide we heard a peculiar sound which appeared to come from the rocks beneath our feet. It was unmistakably the voice of some animal. It was a sort of short call which might be interpreted by the expression "Ooh", pronounced in a shrill treble voice. Andy was as mystified as I was. On that occasion we could not wait to investigate, because we had no idea how far our valley would take us in our search for sheep, but on a subsequent day we found that the sound was made by the rock cony (*Ochotona collaris*), which we discovered lived amongst the rocks and came out at any convenient opening, from which position it uttered its peculiar call. It was very difficult to spot them on the rock slide, their colouring being an almost exact replica of the grey and brown boulders amongst which they lived.

We saw numbers of both species of ptarmigan, the willow ptarmigan predominating. Although the rock ptarmigan were in country which suited them, they did not appear to be in anything like the numbers that the willow ptarmigan were.

After we had followed up this valley for some three miles we came across a big cow moose. We had seen many moose tracks, but had not come across the animals before. This moose was shortly joined by a yearling, and although they did not altogether ignore our presence, they only moved away slowly and apparently with considerable reluctance. About five miles from our camp the valley forked, the right-hand stream rising quickly to a saddle which we presumed was the divide between the Happy River and the

surprised at the rapidity with which your trousers and boots fill up with water. However, we finally passed this spot too, and found ourselves under a high bank. The last view we had had of the sheep which was lying on the higher level led us to believe that he at any rate had not moved at all from the place where we had first seen him. Since leaving our original outlook we had never seen the bigger sheep at all, and we hoped that he had remained where we had previously seen him.

Following up the small stream, we came to a depression in the bank, which seemed to be about opposite where the bigger sheep lay. The slope in front of us was high and steep, possibly 200 feet above the bed of the stream. It was expected that when we had climbed to the top of the bank in front of us—we were quite screened from the view of both sheep now until we arrived at the ridge—the bigger sheep would be found fifty or sixty yards below us. We climbed the ridge, but found that before we could see where the bigger sheep was the one on the higher ground was coming into view. We flattened ourselves in the short scrub, amongst which there were many bushes of blue-berries, and wriggling up the few remaining yards to the top of the ridge we saw the big sheep still facing away from us about seventy yards distant but considerably below us. He was still lying down. I saw out of the tail of my left eye that the sheep on the higher ground had stood up and was looking towards us. I could now see that his head was not in the same class at all with that of the one below. The sheep in front of us had a magnificent pair of horns, which seemed really too big for his head.

Had I been able to take my time over the shot I do not think that the sheep would ever have got up, but I was afraid that the other sheep, which had obviously seen us, might give the alarm, and two or three bounds would have taken the big fellow out of sight. I was still lying down, so, resting my left elbow on the ground in front of me to take my shot, I found that there was merely a spongy mass below my arm. The combination of moss, dwarf blue-berry bushes, and grass, while providing a beautiful cushion on which to lie, was a poor substitute for solid ground as a rest for one's arm when trying to take a bead on the broad white back of the sheep. I fired and then stood up. I was using the .400 which, although rather heavy for sheep hunting, was the rifle I was accustomed to.

The sheep rose from his bed and hobbled forward two or three steps. I said to Andy, "He's hit"; but Andy, who had his glasses on the sheep, answered, "Hell, no! look what he's doing." I looked, and to my utter astonishment I saw that the sheep was feeding! I suppose it must have been the combination of surprise and disgust at my failure to hit the sheep that made me fire too hurriedly with my left barrel, and I missed it again! Still the sheep did not run away, but I suppose the noise of the firing and the thudding of the bullets excited his curiosity, and he now deigned to turn round and look towards us.

I was still mystified by the way he moved. He certainly looked as if he was hit, because he was obviously very lame in both fore feet. While this was going on I had reloaded my rifle and had noticed also that the sheep on the upper ground had made no attempt to run away, but was still staring at us, prob-

ably as surprised as the one in front of us. Having reloaded, I threw up my rifle to fire again at the sheep with the charmed life, when he started to run directly towards us, so I waited until he was within thirty yards and then shot him in the chest. The other sheep now moved off, and as he had a very poor pair of horns we were not interested in him further.

We had only a few yards to go to examine our quarry. I had shot *Ovis dalli* in the Kenai Peninsula three years before; one of the sheep I shot there was an old ram and was a fine specimen of the Kenai sheep, but directly I saw the horns of the sheep before me I realised that I had obtained a trophy far and away better than anything I had collected before. The following dimensions will show what a magnificent head this sheep had:

Length of right horn,  $42\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Length of left horn, 41 inches.

Circumference of right horn at base, 15 inches.

Circumference of left horn at base,  $15\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Spread between tips of horns,  $24\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

There were more than thirteen rings on its horns. The reason why this sheep had appeared to be lame was because its right fore foot had been so severely frostbitten the previous year that it had only one hoof. The left fore foot, although there were two hoofs on it, was also badly crippled; in fact, all four feet had been frostbitten and I felt confident that this ram could not have survived another winter. The tips of his horns were very little worn.

We took the head and headskin and made our way back to camp, where we arrived late that evening, tired but very well pleased with the day's sport. It





had been a glorious day, with much sunshine, and there was every indication of settled weather ahead of us, despite Al. Peel's snow on the mountain-tops.

The next day, the 1st of September, Andy went up the valley to bring in the sheep meat, and I remained in camp and finished the cleaning and curing of the headskin.

Andy came back about three o'clock and brought with him two specimens of the rock conies that we had located the previous day. He also brought back a big load of sheep meat which would keep us going for some time. We fully appreciated the chops that night for our dinner. Andy told me that after he had cut up the carcass of the sheep he had followed up the stream to a small saddle which had shut out the head of the valley from our view the previous day, and from this point he had seen two more sheep. He had also seen that on the other side of the saddle there was another valley which ran into a much bigger valley, which looked to be an ideal spot for big rams. Andy said that one of the rams that he had seen was a very big one. We were now camped in a delightful spot with the prospect of being able to hunt sheep in a locality where there was every reason to suppose we should find good specimens. The weather was perfect; my companion was one of the best guides in Alaska, and I ask my readers what more could the heart of a hunter desire?

- The place where we had shot the first sheep was at least six miles from our camp, and considering that we would now have to go farther afield, it behoved us to make an early start, which we did the following morning. The weather was again glorious, and after

having negotiated the first mile from camp, which was tiresome going owing to the thickness of the moss, we made good time over the next few miles and got up to where we had previously shot the sheep at about nine o'clock. Following up the valley, we came to the saddle from which Andy had seen the sheep, and almost at once we saw a sheep in the bed of the stream, which Andy declared was the same sheep that he had seen the previous day and that it was in almost exactly the same place. The creek that this ram was in was on the other side of the saddle and was a tributary of a stream which ran into the Kuskokwim; in fact, we were on the divide. We were about 4000 feet above sea-level.

We soon got under cover of a steep bank, which sheltered us from the view of the sheep, and following along the edge of this bank we came to a spot where, about 200 yards from the sheep, we could observe him at our leisure. The glasses showed us that he was a very old solitary ram, with the points of his horns badly "broomed". The horns appeared very dark in colour. I said to Andy, considering that I wanted to get a specimen of a sheep for the British Museum, it appeared to me that this old ram was exactly the sort of beast we required.

It would be comparatively easy for us to transport the entire skin of this sheep if I shot him here. If, on the other hand, we waited for some other opportunity one might shoot a ram in some very inaccessible position which would render the removal and transport of his entire pelt a very tedious business. Andy quite agreed, and having made up our minds to try and shoot this sheep, we commenced our stalk. By keep-



ing under cover of the bank of the small stream which we were following, we were able to keep out of sight of the big ram, but soon discovered a small herd of five sheep, consisting of two big rams and three small ones, on the hill-side beyond where the old ram was feeding, and we were in full view of these five sheep. Bearing in mind the behaviour of the sheep on the 31st of August, I began to doubt the wariness of the sheep in this locality, and thought we might possibly take some liberties which would have been instantly fatal in the Kenai Peninsula; so we ignored the five sheep which were looking down on us from the hill-side some 300 yards away and carried on with our stalk until we were within fifty yards of the old ram. He was behind a pile of rocks when we stepped out from the bank which had been sheltering us, and for a moment we could not locate him, but we saw anon the outline of his back moving across our front, and presently he was in full view.

For some unexplained reason I seemed to be unable to shoot with any sort of accuracy in these mountains and did not kill the sheep as cleanly as I should have done. However, he was too close to be lost and it was not long before we were standing over him and admiring his rugged and ancient head. I was greatly astonished to see that the five sheep which were in full view, and which had seen the tragedy enacted before their eyes, had scarcely moved from the position in which they had originally been. We skinned out the entire pelt of this sheep and took the trophies back to camp that afternoon. Although this sheep had not as fine a head as the one I had shot on the 31st of August, he was a good typical specimen of an old

*Ovis dalli* ram. The following are the dimensions of his head:

Length of right horn,  $33\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Length of left horn,  $33\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Circumference of right horn at base,  $14\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Circumference of left horn at base,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Spread between tips of horns,  $21\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

He had more than thirteen rings on his horns. From the appearance of the horns I should think that at least six inches of the tips were gone. His teeth were very much worn, and several of the lower incisors were missing. The following measurements may be of interest:

Height at shoulder between perpendiculars, 3 feet  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Height at rump between perpendiculars, 3 feet 5 inches.

Length from between horns to root of tail, 4 feet 4 inches.

Length from end of nose to root of tail, 5 feet 6 inches.

(The latter two measurements over curves of body.)

Circumference of chest immediately behind fore legs, 4 feet 1 inch.

This old ram, with a ewe and lamb which we subsequently obtained, are now in the Mammal Galleries of the South Kensington Museum in London.

Saturday, the 3rd of September, broke fine and clear. We recorded 8 degrees of frost during the night, and the morning air in the mountains was as crisp and exhilarating as a draught of the finest champagne. This day was to provide me with the finest



THE OLD RAM SHOT ON 2ND SEPTEMBER



RAM SHOT ON 3RD SEPTEMBER—THE BEST  
SPECIMEN OBTAINED



hunting of the trip. After we had shot the old ram on the previous day we had walked down the valley for about half a mile to spy out some of the country which was masked by a big bluff, which narrowed in the head of the valley. Passing this bluff we were able to look up to the head of another long and wide valley which lay to our left. Shortly after we had passed the bluff we ran right into eight sheep, a mixture of rams and ewes. There was a ram in the van which had a full curl on its horns, which probably measured about forty inches in length.

These sheep did not seem to mind us at all, and although we were within thirty yards of them—they were coming towards the part of the valley we had just left—they stood their ground and looked annoyed rather than frightened. I could have shot the ram, but we could see many sheep on the far side of the valley and I thought that as we were in such magnificent sheep country it would be far better to take our time and pick the best heads we could see. Besides, it was late in the day and we had a long way to go to get back to camp.

I was glad that I spared this sheep, because on this 3rd of September we saw and were able to secure specimens which were certainly better than the one which was so obviously unsuspicious of the danger it was in. We decided to proceed immediately to the head of the valley where we had seen the eight sheep, and when we had passed the bluff which acted as a sort of screen to the large valley, we immediately saw dozens of sheep scattered about, feeding on the grass slopes.

The valley we had now got into was a bigger and wider one than the valley which ran up from the back

of our camp, but it was more or less of the same formation, being steep on one side and gently undulating on the other. At the bottom of the valley, close against the steep side, there was a small creek which took its rise in a glacier at the head of the valley. The mountain on the true left bank of the creek rose up almost perpendicularly, but there were several small benches on which we could discern sheep in no less than four places. Downstream from where we were the valley fell very rapidly, but here again we could see sheep high up on the slopes above the river-bed. It was really rather difficult to decide which sheep we should stalk. Almost opposite us, some 200 feet above the river-bed, a lone ram was lying down on a small bench from which he could survey the entire valley. Above him, 300 or 400 feet, there was a small grassy basin into which we saw four sheep disappear. These sheep were all rams, and two of them at least were really big fellows.

High up on the mountain-side, a little downstream from where we were, there was a lone ram, which appeared to have a very massive head. On the slopes on the right-hand bank of the creek, slopes which extended for possibly half a mile from the river-bed before they started to dissolve into the mountain-side, there were numbers of sheep. I think on these slopes there must have been at least thirty. They were all scattered about, grazing on the grass or browsing on the dwarf willow and birch with which the hill-side was covered.

. It was still fairly early in the morning, and with the whole day before us we were able to spend some considerable time using our binoculars, trying to pick

out the best heads amongst the sheep which were before us. The moment we had come round the bluff it was apparent that the wind was blowing directly up the valley and it seemed tolerably certain that the sheep must get our wind; at any rate it appeared quite impossible to attempt a stalk directly up the valley, for this reason. After spying for some time we saw at the head of the valley, near the glacier, six sheep lying down. We must have been at least a mile and a half from these sheep when first we saw them, and they did not appear very large, even looking at them through the binoculars, but it was perfectly plain to see that at least one of them had a really long pair of horns.

I had with me a 20-power telescope, which I now took out of my pack sack and used for the first time. This glass revealed the fact that all six sheep were big rams with at least three first-class heads amongst them. After Andy had had a look at them through the telescope I said to him, "Andy, those are the best sheep we can see in any accessible place and I think we might very easily pick out two really first-class heads." Andy quite agreed, but suggested that, due to the wind, it would be extremely difficult to get anywhere near this particular band of sheep. We had a good look at the country and found that the only way to get to the head of the valley, except by following up the stream, would be to make a long detour and get either behind or on to the top of the mountains which were to our left. This was much too severe an undertaking in the time at our disposal, and I could not help thinking that we might ignore the usual precautions taken by hunters who follow white sheep and

"take a chance" with the wind. About eighty yards from us there were two sheep feeding, one a three-year-old ram and the other a small ewe. These sheep were directly to leeward of us and showed no signs of suspicion. I said to Andy, "Look here, Andy; I don't believe the sheep in this part of the country have the slightest notion what a human being either looks like or smells like. If they did, our previous experiences would have been entirely different and these few sheep just in front of us would have been over the mountains long ago." Andy, experienced old stalker that he was, appeared reluctant to agree to my theory, but he was faced with a situation which made it impossible for him to ignore the fact that the sheep did not appear to take the slightest notice of us. "All right," said Andy, "we will get down into the creek and follow up under the bank; probably the wind will not blow up from the creek to the slopes to our left as we go upstream, but will more likely follow along the bed of the river."

We then made our way down, in full view of several sheep, to the bed of the main creek, and found that we had a narrow gut up which we could walk to the glacier, which was about a mile away. While doing this we would be out of view of the band of six sheep which we had previously decided we would go after. The lone ram on the bench to our right allowed us to get within a hundred yards of him before he stood up. He had been in such a position that he must have seen us the whole time after we had left the bluff, but even now, although we were approaching where he stood and were in clear view of him, he did not appear to be in the slightest hurry to move on. His horns



were worn and were something like those of the ram I had got as a specimen for the British Museum. At last he moved slowly off round a hummock which shut him out from our view.

A little farther on we passed a small basin in which there were two young sheep. They looked up and watched us with mild surprise, and then went on feeding. If they thought anything at all about us they probably thought that we were the funniest-looking bears they had ever seen. We now had a straight run to the head of the valley, and when we were approaching the nose of the glacier, an active glacier which was busy pushing stones and mud into the valley, we cautiously crept up to a suitable place in the bank to spy out the land.

We had not seen the six sheep for about an hour and of course it was very likely that they had shifted their position. Definite landmarks were not easy to find on that grassy, undulating slope, and we were not absolutely certain of the exact spot where the sheep had been lying when we first saw them. We searched the slopes in front of us but could not see the six rams, so went a little farther up the valley and climbed up the mound of stones and mud in front of the glacier. From a safe vantage point we saw four sheep some way up a gully to one side of the glacier, and at first we thought they might have been some of our band of six, but the glasses failed to show a really good head amongst them. They were all rams.

I suggested to Andy that we must have left the rams behind us, so we retraced our steps to a point about 200 or 300 yards farther downstream than the spot from which we had spied before. Climbing up

the bank and cautiously looking over a small rise in front of us, we immediately saw the tops of the horns of three or four sheep. Carefully reconnoitring the ground, we were soon in a sheltered spot from which we could watch the sheep. Sure enough, here was our band of six rams. They were on a slope about sixty yards from us, with a small basin in between. As they were all lying down it was difficult to decide which of the rams appeared to carry the finest head. They were all good, shootable rams, but one of the middle ones appeared to have the longest pair of horns, longer than any of the others, and after him I think that the one on the extreme right might be considered to carry the best head. Andy whispered to me that he thought the third from the end, counting from the right, was the best of the lot, pointing out the very wide spread between the tips of the horns.

Although the sheep were facing towards us and one might presume they would have been able to detect some small movement while we were spying at them, yet they did not take the slightest notice. I made up my mind to try and fill my bill of sheep by shooting the two best rams, but I knew that the moment I fired the others would jump to their feet and it would be difficult to pick out the next best head amongst so many good ones. So I thought it would be advisable to shoot at the middle one first and take the chance that the one to the extreme right would remain sufficiently long in that position to enable me to pick him out with certainty.

Andy was anxious to commemorate this trip into the Alaska Range by shooting a trophy for himself, and this seemed to be a suitable opportunity for him

to do so. I fired at the middle ram, which immediately jumped to its feet; and, foolishly forgetting that my second shot should have been reserved for the ram on the extreme right, I fired again at the wounded ram. Throwing out the shells, I reloaded as quickly as possible and found the sheep still in front of us but somewhat bunched up, but just as I was about to fire they strung out a little and I fired at what I thought was the second best ram. Andy took his chance a little later.

The sheep now started to run across our front, and I fired two more shots at the wounded rams. Following them as quickly as we could, we found one ram *in extremis* on a stone chute; another, Andy's, standing, very sick indeed, amongst some dwarf birch; but the one with the very wide-spreading horns we could not see. Presently we saw that he had got down to the river and was moving slowly up the creek bed. Andy, who had a .280 Ross rifle with him, ran after the third sheep and gave him the *coup de grâce*.

While this was going on we had been running after the sheep, and I, at any rate, was glad to sit down with "bellows to mend". After a few minutes to recover my breath I went back to look at the sheep on the stone chute. He was a magnificent specimen of a mature *Ovis dalli*; but this was not the best ram, and I had still to feast my eyes on one of the best *Ovis dalli* heads I shall probably ever see. While I was examining this ram Andy came along from where he had been in the bed of the river examining the one that had died there. The first thing he said to me was, "It is a perfect peach, and I guess it has a 30-inch spread between the tips of its horns. I have never

seen a finer head." I went down to the river-bed, and, sure enough, Andy's description had been justified. These are the dimensions of this ram, measured carefully with a steel tape on the spot:

Length of right horn, 40 inches.

Length of left horn,  $40\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Circumference of right horn at base,  $14\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Circumference of left horn at base,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Spread between tips of horns,  $29\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

The measurements of the head of the ram on the stone chute were very little inferior to this one:

Length of right horn,  $40\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Length of left horn, 40 inches.

Circumference of right horn at base, 14 inches.

Circumference of left horn at base,  $14\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Spread between tips of horns,  $26\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

We had not yet examined the third ram, and on returning to the spot where we had last seen him amongst the birch scrub, we found that he had slithered down the hill-side to the bed of the creek some 150 feet below. His head was a little inferior to the other two, but a fine head for all that. These are the measurements:

Length of right horn,  $38\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Length of left horn,  $38\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Circumference of base of right horn,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Circumference of base of left horn,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Spread between tips of horns,  $21\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

The points of the horns of this ram were a little "broomed", and possibly had lost about a couple of inches of their length.

It was some little time after mid-day and we had a lot of work ahead of us. The weather was gloriously

fine and we worked for some hours on the removal of the heads and capes of the three sheep. It was, of course, impossible for us to hope to pack them all back to camp, but we got some of the trophies home, reaching camp at 7.30 P.M., very tired but full of the glorious day's sport. Andy, who had had dozens of hunts after wild sheep, told me that evening that he thought this day was the best day he had ever had hunting *Ovis dalli*. That night we had frost again, and the following morning was clear and bright with every prospect of another glorious day.

I remained in camp and Andy went back to get the rest of the trophies and the sheep's meat. During the day Al. and Ben arrived with the horses, having taken four days to get from Anderson's to Happy River and back, which, considering the condition of the trail, was pretty good going. Ben went out in the afternoon to help Andy bring in the trophies, but had not been gone an hour when he returned for his rifle, having run into a grizzly bear and cub feeding on the blue-berries on the hill-side. Ben seemed rather upset about it and explained that he had come out from a patch of scrub almost on to the bear. I questioned him about the bear and he said that the cub was a young one, obviously born this year. I should no doubt have been able to "connect up" with the bear had I wished to do so, but I did not care to shoot a female which had a young one running at heel. When Andy returned about 4 P.M., having met Ben some two miles from camp, he told me that he also had seen the bear with the cub.

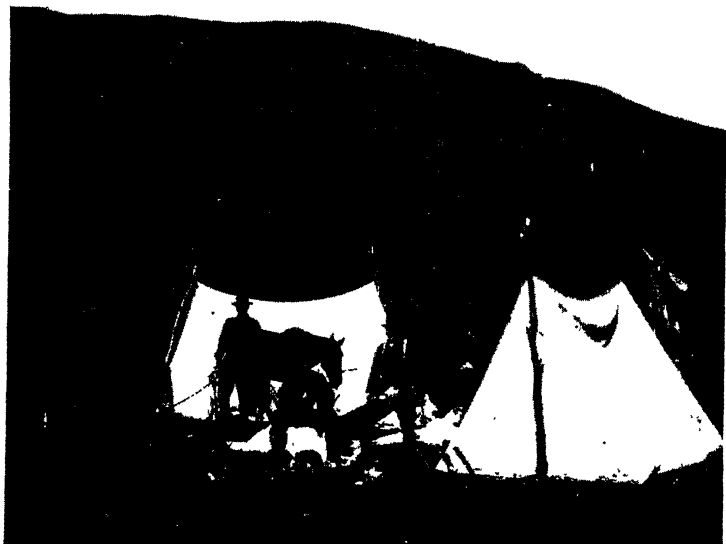
That night we had three degrees of frost. The following day we completed the cleaning up of the sheep

heads, and after having taken a photograph of the trophies we loaded them up on to the two horses and sent them down to Anderson's Road House by Ben.

While Ben was loading up the sheep heads I asked him about the use of the "diamond hitch". In fact, I was ignorant enough to ask Ben if he used this particular hitch when he was packing the horses on this trip. "Hell, no," said Ben, "you can't use a diamond hitch when you are packing a horse with all sorts of oddments. You can only use a diamond hitch when you have loads which more or less balance each other, such as two sacks of flour or meal, or a couple of cases about the same size. When I have to pack a lot of things like these here I always use the squaw hitch." Of course I was fool enough to ask Ben why it was called a squaw hitch. "Hell, don't you know?" said Ben. "It's called a squaw hitch because you go on tying knots until the rope's finished!" I think the laugh was on me.

We took it easy in the camp for the rest of the day. It was mild and warm, there being no wind and the thermometer registering 50° in the shade. We decided to move our camp on the morrow over the divide in the Ptarmigan Valley down towards the South Fork of the Kuskokwim.

With the exception of two specimens of sheep for the British Museum, our sheep hunting was finished. It would be difficult to find any place in Alaska where one could get finer sheep hunting than that we had enjoyed. I think it must be fairly apparent, from the description I have given of the extraordinary indifference these sheep displayed to the presence of man, that no one had been in these valleys for many years.



CAMP ON ROCK CONY CREEK  
Andy, Al, and Ben after the sheep hunt





The information that we had received which had led us to explore Rock Cony Creek had been given by a man who had prospected the small valley running into the Kuskokwim Valley, and at the head of which was the glacier I have mentioned. It is more than likely that he had never reached the spot at the head of the valley, but had seen sheep on the slopes and had thus become cognisant of the fact that there were sheep to be found in that locality.

We had heard that there were many sheep up the valley of the Rohn River, also a tributary of the Kuskokwim, but some fifteen miles the other side of Rainy Pass. Nine miles farther down the Kuskokwim a tributary comes into the true left bank, which is known as Post River, and sheep were reported to be found in the mountains from which this river sprang. There is a road house at Rohn River where I was informed there were many sheep heads to be seen, and I think it was Charlie Smith who told me when we returned to the Skwentna Crossing Road House that he had seen horns of sheep which had been killed in the Rohn River valley quite as good, if not better, than those I had obtained.

It is a well-established fact that the eyesight of mountain sheep is exceptionally keen, and it is generally supposed that their power of scent is also very highly developed. It is not reasonable to suppose that the sheep we had hunted and which took no notice of us could not have scented us, and, as it is a fact generally accepted that the dread of man is an instinct which is natural to all wild animals, one cannot conceive why these sheep were not alarmed when they scented us. It is possible that the powers of scent

of the *Ovis dalli* have been overestimated, and I believe that the mountain sheep relies more on his sense of sight than he does on his sense of smell. I very carefully examined the pelts of the sheep I had killed to see if there were any signs of black hairs to be found, and was unable to find any traces of them even in their tails. Their pelts were, generally speaking, in splendid condition, being very little stained and almost pure white.



PTARMIGAN VALLEY. AFTER THE DAY'S WORK



## CHAPTER VII

### PTARMIGAN VALLEY

#### NIMROD

Ye who have travelled the wilderness, ye who have followed the chase,  
Whom the voice of the forest comforts and the touch of the lonely place;  
Ye who are sib to the jungle and know it and hold it good—  
Praise ye the name of Nimrod, a Fellow who understood.

HILTON BROWN.

BEN returned with the horses to our camp on the evening of the 5th, and on the morning of the 6th we moved down the Ptarmigan Valley toward the Kuskokwim River, passing the divide about four miles from our camp. The country we had to travel over was without any trails or tracks except those made by wild animals, and although we could follow the bed of the Happy River creek in many places, we often had to make our way as well as we could through the birch scrub, which was frequently very thick. We were helped somewhat by the moose trails.

It was a glorious day after a cold, frosty night, and as we progressed down the valley we saw many signs of game, both of moose and caribou. We presently saw a big bull caribou in the bed of the stream which we were now following on the other side of the divide. This stream was a tributary of the Styx River, which joined the Kuskokwim River at the end

of Ptarmigan Valley. The bull caribou, although its horns were just clean of velvet and it was thus suitable to take as a trophy, had scarcely a first-class head, the spread of the horns being narrow. While, up to date, we had not seen very many caribou, we had seen quantities of their tracks, and we thought that it would be advisable to take our time in dealing with the caribou and find out exactly what we had to pick from.

In the early afternoon we came to a sand bar which, although not a very good camping place, appeared to be the only available spot where we could put up a temporary camp to enable us to explore the surrounding country. We were now about twelve miles from our camp on Cony Creek. The valley here was some three miles wide, cut up a good deal by small creeks, but covered with dwarf birch, some dwarf willows in the creek bed, and reindeer moss. The latter being the chief food of the caribou, we felt that we were in what might be described as caribou country.

Our camp was 3000 feet above sea-level. In the evening we saw about three miles from us, at the mouth of a canyon which came out of the mountains to the south, a wisp of smoke. We knew that there were no prospectors in that part of the country and we suspected that some Indians whom we had seen on the Skwentna River, and who had stated that they were going up to the headwaters of the Skwentna above Happy River to hunt for their winter moose meat, might have found their way into the canyon, which we believed, and afterwards found correct, provided a pass into Portage Creek from the valley

of the Styx. Porterage Creek is a small tributary of the Skwentna and had no doubt obtained its name because there was an old trail from the Skwentna to the Kuskokwim over the divide between Porterage and the Styx.

The following morning Andy and I went up the valley towards our old camp to examine some of the side valleys for caribou or moose. Ben expressed a desire to go over to the spot where we had seen the wisp of smoke on the previous evening, and as we were all curious to know who were the people in the valley, Ben's wishes entirely coincided with ours. Andy and I came across no less than fifteen moose during the day. Amongst these fifteen we saw three big bulls, but none of them seemed to carry antlers which were anything out of the ordinary, although probably three of them had antlers over 50 inches in spread. We saw also several caribou, but none bore large enough antlers to attract us.

Late in the evening, on our way back to camp, following the trail that we had cut out the previous day, we saw below us what appeared to be a pair of moose antlers. The glasses soon revealed the fact that a big moose was lying down half a mile from us in the scrub. His body was entirely concealed, but his antlers showing up above the birch made a conspicuous mark on the landscape. The antlers of this bull, which were quite clean of velvet—it was now the 7th of September and one would expect the bull moose to be about to commence the rut—appeared very white amongst the dark foliage of the scrub, and also seemed to be quite worthy of our attention. We approached the spot where the bull was lying down

and were soon able, with the help of our glasses, to get a very good idea of the size of his antlers. We could count thirteen or fourteen points on one of them. I said to Andy that I thought he was a worthy bull which I might shoot, but as we approached closer the ground fell away a little bit in front of us and we found we could really see nothing except the tips of his antlers. We got within about thirty yards of this moose—the wind was favourable, blowing directly across our front—but the moose showed no inclination to get up, and until he did get up it would be quite impossible to fire at him.

With rifle in readiness I kicked some bushes close to me to try and attract his attention. Nothing happened. Andy and I both rattled some bushes, and then I picked up some sticks and threw them in the direction of the moose. Still nothing happened, except that the moose shook his head and thrashed a few of the shrubs close to him with his antlers; but he did not get up. Here we were within thirty yards of a moose whose suspicions we could not arouse in any way, and one really did feel rather a fool and rather mean to be intent on killing an animal which appeared to be so incapable of taking care of himself. I said to Andy that the only thing we could do was to go round and give him our wind. Surely he would stand up then! We moved away with this object in view, but found that there was a small depression in the ground which made it necessary for us to make a rather longer detour than we had anticipated; but ultimately we got well to the windward of the moose at a distance of about fifty yards from him.

This did the trick. Presently there was a commo-





BEN AND MOOSE WITH 62 $\frac{1}{4}$ " SPREAD



tion amongst the birch scrub and an enormous bull moose slowly unfolded himself and stood facing us. I whispered to Andy that I was going to shoot, but Andy said he thought his horns were not first class. However, I used my own judgement on this occasion. The moose itself was an enormous beast with a most colossal head, and the very size of his head tended to make his antlers look smaller than they really were.

My judgement was not at fault; after the moose was dead and we were able to take the measurements which interested us we found that his antlers had a spread of  $62\frac{1}{4}$  inches, with 34 points. The antlers, however, were not very heavy. The moose itself was a very large and heavily built animal. I measured his height and length carefully with a steel tape, both measurements being taken between perpendiculars. He measured at the shoulder 6 feet 7 inches, and in length 10 feet 5 inches.

It was too late to do anything with the trophies that evening, so we made our way back to camp, leaving the work for the morrow. Upon our return we found that Ben had been over to the mouth of the canyon, or nearly so, where he had seen an Indian encampment and many caribou skins stretched out to cure. Ben told us that he did not go very close to the encampment because he was not sure who the Indians were and was not looking for trouble.

To leave our hunting for a moment, I should like to make some remarks regarding these Indian hunters. We found out subsequently that they had killed some dozens of young caribou; in fact, we saw evidence of the destruction of two small caribou, where merely the skins had been taken and the meat

left. In one place we found a pile of meat and close to this meat were the udders of a young cow caribou. Possibly the udders had been cut out to destroy the identity of the sex of the skin should any questions be asked. The Indians killed these caribou, specially selecting females and young, because they wished to utilise the skins for snowshoe webbing. I understand that the thicker hides of the older animals are not so suitable; possibly are not so easy to prepare for the purpose for which the Indians take the skins.

So we have the Indian killing off the breeding stock for his own benefit. When we were in southwestern Alaska one of the Indian trappers whose services we utilised to bring some of our stores over to Izembek Creek showed Andy a spot where he informed him the previous fall they had killed several caribou. Andy asked him how he managed to get the meat back to their settlement, which was near King Cove and many miles from where the caribou had been killed. The Indian looked at Andy with mild surprise and said, "We no take meat back; we only take tallow." This also was an instance of destruction of wild life for the benefit of a few individuals amongst whom the idea of any conservation of what Nature provides is an entirely unknown quantity.

I may say that on our return to Susitna we found that the Indians who had been in the canyon had returned before us; they were the band we had seen going up the Skwentna River. Ostensibly they had gone up the Skwentna River to get moose for their winter meat, a perfectly legitimate object; but what had they actually done? They had gone up the Skwentna River; they had gone into the fringe of

Ptarmigan Valley; they had destroyed dozens of caribou; they had then gone up the Skwentna River, where they had shot a moose, and on their way back to the Susitna River they *sold* practically all the moose meat on their way downstream. They did not appear to have taken much of the caribou meat out of the Ptarmigan Valley; it was too far to pack it over Portage Creek, especially as they were loaded up with skins.

I gave information regarding these matters to those whom I believed would take some notice of such wanton destruction of wild life, and I have no doubt that some notice was taken. The killing of old and selected bulls of almost any species of wild game will not seriously interfere with the natural propagation of the species; but directly you start to commercialise the business and have a certain section of the public unrestrained in their slaughter of young and immature beasts, because their object is one of personal gain to themselves, either to their pockets or to their stomachs, you are undoubtedly jeopardising the future of the game which is subject to such persecution. The entire question of game conservation is one which is receiving great attention from many persons all over the world, who are interested in seeing that the fauna of the world, the large fauna especially, is not allowed to be wantonly destroyed; and I wish to appeal strongly to those interested in the preservation of the fauna of Alaska that it is up to them to try and check the predatory instincts of such persons as those I have referred to above.

The following morning Andy, Ben, and I went down to the moose carcass to remove the trophies.

The day was very foggy and a drizzling rain set in soon after we had left camp. Bearing in mind the fact that the moose horns and headskin would have to be transported back to Anderson's in a few days, we carried them up to the trail and, making a cache there, left them to be collected later on. Owing to the difficulties of transport, due to the thick bush through which the horses had to travel along part of the trail to Happy River, it would have been an endless source of trouble had we attempted to transport the moose horns as they were, so I split the skull down the middle and cut off the entire nasal bone, which simplified the process of packing very much. We had brought a small handsaw with us for this purpose.

The following morning it was still very foggy; in fact, a fog seemed to have settled in the lower portion of Ptarmigan Valley, which made it difficult for us to use our glasses in our search for game. It was clearer at the back of our camp, so we went up into the mountains to try and locate some caribou which Al. had seen the previous day in that direction. We soon saw two caribou bulls, but found that the caribou were not like the sheep or moose, and were extremely wary and shy. Of course, the Indians had been hunting them for some days close to where we were camped, and I had no doubt that this had some bearing on their shyness.

The first caribou we stalked gave us the slip, but presently we spotted what appeared to be a fine specimen which was having a really good fight with some stout birch bushes in a small basin halfway up the mountain. We had to make a long detour—the wind made a direct stalk impossible—and upon coming to

the final approach over a small rise which should have brought us within fifty or sixty yards of where we had seen the caribou, we discovered that the basin was empty. We crossed the basin, keeping a very sharp look-out, feeling sure that the caribou was close by, when, coming round a small shoulder of one of the hills surrounding the basin, we saw the deer running away at considerable speed up a small gully ahead of us. What had alarmed him I do not know, because the wind was favourable to us and he certainly could not have seen us, but we found that this was not the only caribou that was exceptionally alert; in fact, all that we came across were very wide awake indeed.

The small gully in front of us came to an end some hundred yards to our right, and running forward to try and intercept the caribou, I got a shot at him at eighty or ninety yards, which, being supplemented later on, brought him to the ground. He fell over a small ridge, and until we were right on top of him we were unable to see his antlers at close quarters. I was astounded at the length and symmetry of the head carried by this caribou. He was a stockily built animal with horns of the following dimensions: Length of right horn,  $54\frac{1}{2}$  inches; length of left horn, 54 inches. Circumference at base of right horn, 7 inches; circumference at base of left horn, 6 inches. Number of points, right horn, 19; number of points, left horn, 23; widest outside span of horns, 41 inches.

I thought this caribou would be a fine specimen to collect for Dr. Nelson, so we took the entire skin. We got back to camp late that evening.

Having seen a very suitable place for a camp a little way up the valley from where our present camp

was, and as the spot where we now were was uncomfortable and quite unsheltered, we decided to move farther up the creek. We moved up about a mile, and then pitched our camp on a very good site close under the shelter of a bluff which came down to the river. Although it had been raining while we were moving, it cleared up a little later and Andy and I went up the mountain at the back of our camp, after caribou. We saw a big caribou with a very fine set of antlers, but were unable to come up to him. During the night we had frost again and the morning broke clear and bright. We had now got sufficient trophies, including those that were at Anderson's Road House, to justify our sending the horses out to Happy River, so Al. and Ben left us on the morning of the 12th, with the moose and caribou heads, the headskin of the moose, and the entire skin of the caribou. They would pick up all the sheep horns and headskins at Anderson's on their way down.

We had seen from our camp, and also from the hills on which we had been hunting, looking across to the south side of Ptarmigan Valley, the conspicuous horns of a large bull moose. He had been in evidence for three days, and during that time he had only moved along the valley about a mile. When first seen he was some four miles distance from us. I suggested to Andy that we might go across the valley and have a look at him, because he appeared to have very wide antlers and was obviously a really big moose. It was not a difficult thing to get close to this moose, but when we were within reasonable shooting range of him we found that he was feeding in birch scrub which was very nearly as high as he was, and it was





BULL MOOSE SHOT ON 12TH SEPTEMBER. 63 $\frac{1}{2}$ " SPREAD.



BEN WITH CARIBOU SHOT ON 18TH SEPTEMBER



some time before I was able to get a shot, dropping him in a small grass glade amongst the birch scrub. He had a very massive pair of antlers, and although the spread was not much wider than the one I had got a few days before, the antlers must have been nearly twice as thick. There was a thin shred of velvet still attached to one tine of his right antler. The spread of his horns was  $63\frac{1}{2}$  inches between the tips of the longest tines, and the palms measured 17 inches in the widest place. We skinned out the head and Andy took the headskin back to camp. The horns we intended to deal with on the morrow.

When we went the following day to the moose carcass we took with us a small hand-weighing machine, because I was anxious to ascertain the weight of the head of this moose. Andy said that he had seldom seen antlers so thick as those carried by this moose, and after we had cleaned the head of most of the meat and removed the lower jaw, the skull with antlers attached weighed 105 pounds. This seemed an enormous weight, but I had no reason to doubt the accuracy of my scales, which had been given to me by Mr. M'Guire and had been tested by a very reliable firm, Fairbanks, Morse, & Co.

Later on, when we had removed all the meat from the head and cut off the nasal bones entirely, the remnants of the skull and the horns weighed eighty-five pounds. This still seemed to me an enormous weight, compared with the known weights of other moose antlers. It is possible that my machine may have been a few pounds out, but certainly not very much, and I think I can safely say that at the outside there was not an error of more than 5 per cent.

When Andy was carrying the head and antlers—this was after I had thrown some doubt on the accuracy of the weighing machine—he said, “I guess there’s not much wrong with that scale.” Andy had had a long experience of packing, and was a good judge of what he had on his back.

Although this moose had such a heavy pair of antlers he was not as big a beast as the one I had got on the previous occasion. His height at the shoulder was 6 feet 7 inches, but his length was only 9 feet 5 inches. He had a long face, however, and measured from between the horns to the end of the snout, 2 feet 2 inches.

When we had shot the caribou on the 9th we had seen what we believed were sheep on a mountain at the head of the creek on which we were camped; but before we had been able to examine with our glasses what we took to be sheep the mist had shut out the view. The country being suitable for sheep, and wanting to get specimens of a ewe and a lamb for the British Museum, I thought we had better go up into the mountains at the back of our camp and try and obtain what we wanted. The gloriously fine weather that we had enjoyed at the beginning of September seemed to have broken, and should the rain turn to snow we would soon find sheep hunting in the mountains an impossibility.

On the morning of the 14th, following up the creek on which we were camped, we found at the head of the valley a small lake which constituted the divide, the stream on the far side of the lake running down to the Kuskokwim Valley. We followed along the edge of the valley of this creek for some three or four miles and



1. MOUNTED HEAD OF MOOSE WITH 63 $\frac{1}{2}$ " SPREAD



soon located a large number of sheep. This valley seemed to be as full of ewes and lambs as the other had been of rams; in fact, we never saw a big ram at all in this valley. We soon located about twenty ewes and lambs, some 200 feet up the mountain-side to our left. They were some way ahead of us and we were able to drop down into the valley and approach them with great ease. We selected an old ewe and a lamb which were more or less isolated from the others, as suitable ones to go after. This old ewe and her lamb were at the farther end of the slope on which the sheep were feeding.

As we passed below the main body of the sheep we noticed several had spotted us, and although they stopped their feeding to look up and watch us for a few moments, they did not move or make any attempt to run away, and presently went on feeding as before. We skirted round the sheep and made our way behind the spur which ran down from the mountain-side toward the creek bed along which we had taken our way; and under the cover of this spur we stalked up to a position which we thought would take us well within suitable range of the sheep we wanted.

When nearly at the top of the ridge of the spur we rested for a few minutes to regain our breath and to have a look around over the new country which was now revealed to us, looking down toward the Kuskokwim Valley. We could now see for the first time, far below us, the thin, silver ribbon of the Kuskokwim River, flanked by sandy mud bars similar to the Skwentna. Never for a moment supposing that the sheep we were after would behave differently from

the rams in the other valley, we were surprised to find as we crept up to the ridge that there were no sheep in view at all. Looking up the valley which we had recently come down, we saw about twenty sheep crossing the creek—certainly at no great speed—and making their way up into the mountains which lay behind us. Some wise old ewe must have been amongst those twenty sheep; and, taking no chances on what would happen to them if they ignored the peculiar-looking things which they had seen disappear round the edge of the spur, she had obviously led them away out of possible danger. Andy and I both felt rather foolish, but we had ample opportunity to recover from the result of our over-confidence, because there were sheep in view farther down the valley which were still undisturbed.

Following along the side of the hill, we presently came to a place where we could see a large band of sheep feeding ahead of us; in fact, we had now several scattered bands of sheep from which we should be able to obtain the specimens we wanted. Below us in the creek bed there were five sheep; a little above us there were a few sheep scattered on the hill-side; but ahead we could see what appeared to be a large band of ewes and lambs. We had no difficulty with our stalk, but decided this time to refrain from wasting our time admiring the scenery until our task was accomplished. I asked Andy if he would mind shooting the ewe and the lamb, because he had a .280 Ross rifle, with which he could do much better shooting at that elevation than I could with my heavier weapon. Although Andy quite naturally did not like to shoot a ewe and a lamb, he undertook to do so at my special



request, because these sheep were wanted as specimens for the British Museum.

We were now on a wide grass bench at the extreme left of the valley which we had been following. Above us towered a steepish cliff, and on the slope above this cliff there were some thirty sheep. Andy selected a ewe and her lamb which were close to the edge of the cliff, and presently they rolled and slithered down to the grass bench where we were standing. The lamb had broken off one of its horns—the horns were only about an inch and a half long—but we were able to find the horn not very far from where the carcass lay. After the shot the rest of the sheep bunched together and remained for some little time in full view. Andy and I climbed the mountain-side to try and get a photograph at close range of these sheep; but although they were prepared to watch us from a distance we were unable to get close enough to them to get a good photograph.

We returned to the grassy bank and carried out the work of taking the heads and pelts of these sheep. While we were on the cliff trying to take a photograph of the sheep we came across the droppings of a big bear, and amongst these droppings were the hooves and some of the small bones of a young lamb. This was clear evidence that the bear had eaten a white sheep, but how the lamb had met its death we were unable to conjecture.

After the work of preparing the trophies was completed, Andy and I found a sheltered spot behind a large boulder where we enjoyed our lunch.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE IRON HAND OF WINTER

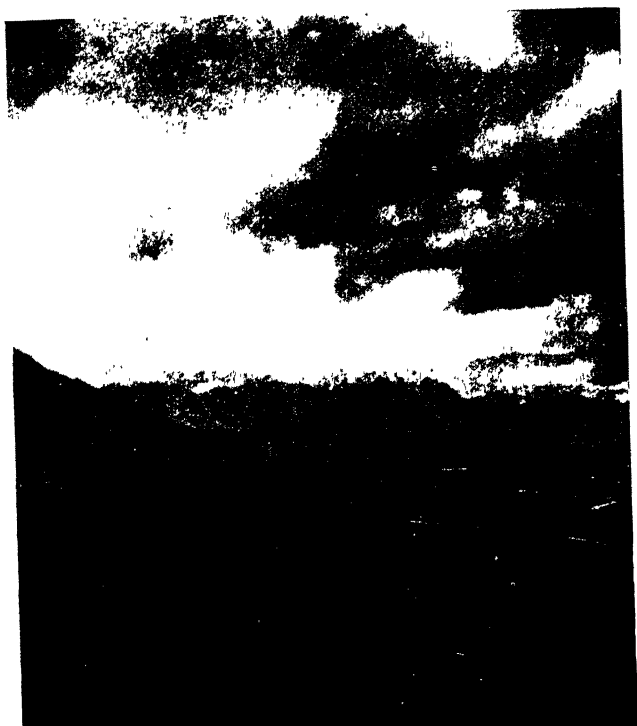
Now, o'er all the dreary North-land,  
Mighty Peboan, the Winter,  
Breathing on the lakes and rivers  
Into stone had changed their waters.  
From his hair he shook the snow-flakes  
Till the plains were strewn with whiteness,  
One uninterrupted level,  
As if, stooping, the Creator  
With His hand had smoothed them over.

LONGFELLOW.

WE were now in the mountains which rose up from the true right bank of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim. We had a magnificent view of the country, and could plainly see where the Kuskokwim came through the mountain to the south of where we were; and also we could see, just before the Kuskokwim turned sharply to the east, the mouth of the Hartman River. We could see the entire valley of the Hartman River, which appeared to run in a south-westerly direction. It was a broad valley with flat benches rising up from the river bed and was probably—as we had heard it to be—a good country for moose. The photographs of this scene showed quite clearly the valleys of the Hartman and Kuskokwim Rivers. This was the only view I got of the Hartman River.



KUSKOKWIM AND HARTMAN RIVERS





The severe weather that we were unfortunate enough to experience towards the end of the month made it quite impossible for us to get into the Hartman River Valley.

Opposite us, on the other side of the Kuskokwim River, we could see large areas of rolling hills, many of them apparently covered with reindeer moss, a locality which I feel sure must carry numbers of caribou. We were several miles away from these hills, too far to be able to pick up any game with our glasses. Later on we visited the Kuskokwim River near the mouth of the Styx River. The latter cut the right bank of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River about six miles above the mouth of the Hartman River, which joins the Kuskokwim on the true left bank. The mountain that we were on was divided some five or six miles south of where we were by the Kuskokwim River; and if we had followed the mountain-side in a southerly direction from where we were we would have passed the mouth of the Hartman River on the other bank and continuing our journey would have found ourselves ultimately at the mouth of the Styx River. I have interpolated this description because a few remarks relating to the local geography of this country might prove useful to some future hunter who is anxious to obtain specimens of the game in that part of the country. The valley from which we had obtained the last of the rams lay to the north of where we were, and was possibly some eight or nine miles distant. That valley would run more or less parallel to the valley we had just come down.

While we were enjoying our lunch we suddenly heard a rushing sound coming in our direction, which,

when we first heard it, sounded like a snow slide, but we were almost at once disillusioned. An enormous flock of ptarmigan came round the bluff where we had shot the sheep and, swooping down close to the rock under which we sat, passed so close to us that we instinctively ducked our heads. We had noticed for a few days previous to this that the ptarmigan were beginning to bunch and were forming into flocks which became bigger day by day. There were an enormous number of ptarmigan in this country. We must have seen thousands of them, and when a flock of some hundreds of ptarmigan, travelling at an enormous speed, pass directly over your head at the distance of only a yard or so, the noise is astounding.

While we were still under the rock, from the other direction a small flock of snow bunting (*Plectrophanes nivalis*) passed over our heads. Both the ptarmigan and the snow bunting were well advanced in the change from their summer to their winter plumage. Andy stated that he had always heard that when these birds started to bunch up into flocks the winter was not far away. We were only in the middle of September and I had been given to understand that we should probably be able to remain in this locality until the first week of October, but unfortunately the weather had changed and we never had any really good weather again except for two days just before the equinox. We got back to camp at a quarter past six, in a nasty, misty rain.

The following morning Andy, going outside the tent before I did, saw a bear within half a mile of our camp. Hastily putting on some clothes and leaving our breakfast to take care of itself, we went in the

direction where the bear was. He had been on the hill-side just above a large extent of dwarf birch trees amongst which there were quantities of blue-berries, and as we could no longer see him we presumed that he had gone into these birch bushes. We hunted around for about half an hour, but never saw the bear again. There was a steep and narrow gully close to where Andy had seen the animal, and it is quite possible that while we were hunting around in the birch bushes the bear had disappeared up this gully.

We spent the rest of the day cleaning up the sheep skins. On this day we saw from this camp no less than four species of game—bear, moose, sheep, and caribou—so we appropriately named the stream “Game View Creek”. It was dull and rainy most of the day.

On the 16th we went up the Ptarmigan Valley after caribou, but had no luck, only seeing two the whole day. The day was a bad one; it rained and hailed off and on from morning till evening. During the night we had some frost, but in the morning there was such a heavy fog hanging over the valley that we did not leave camp until after nine o'clock. We then went down the valley to the mouth of the River Styx where it joins the South Fork of the Kuskokwim. On our way down we saw a herd of nine or ten caribou, which we stalked, there being one good bull amongst these beasts. Our stalk was successful; that is to say, we got close to the herd, but they had been out of our view for some time and when we were within a very easy range of the nearest caribou and I straightened myself up to take my shot, we discovered that the big bull was no longer with them. He had given us the slip.

Later on in the afternoon when we were some way up the hill-side we saw far down in the plain below us a solitary bull caribou apparently drinking from a small pond which lay some few hundred yards back from the bank of the creek. We watched this caribou for some time. He appeared to have his head close down to the water in such a position that he led us to believe when first we saw him that he was drinking, but considering that he kept in this position for about a quarter of an hour while we were carefully watching him through our glasses, he obviously had his head down close to the water for some other purpose. Although he was too far away for us to be able to see exactly what his antlers were like, it was plain that he was a very big caribou and we decided to go after him. It took us about an hour to get down the hill-side, across the river, and up on the plain where we had seen him, and when we did see him again we were astonished to discover that he was still in the same position. It looked as if he was tied there. We got within a hundred yards of him by creeping up a small depression, and then looking up through some of the birch scrub in front of us, we found that he was on the alert with his head well up in the air.

The solution to his mysterious behaviour was apparent: he had just lately lost the greater part of one of his antlers, and the pain caused by the inflammation which had no doubt set up in the stump of his antler had caused him to seek relief in the numbing effect of the cold water of the lake. He was a glorious beast and had undoubtedly had an exceptionally fine pair of antlers. The undamaged antler was a magnificent one, with many points and of exceptional weight.





MOUNTED HEAD OF CARIBOU SHOT ON 20TH SEPTEMBER



There was only about one foot left of the broken antler. He had probably broken this fighting, the very size and weight of his body having possibly been his undoing. We then stepped out in full view of the caribou, but he did not take immediate alarm, and came slowly in our direction. Presently he got a whiff of our wind, and started to run away in a circle, gradually getting farther and farther away from us.

I think this was the finest caribou we saw on the trip; he was an immense beast, sleek and round like a stall-fed heifer. There was one peculiarity I noticed about the gait of the caribou in this part of the country. When they were alarmed and wished to move quickly I noticed that instead of galloping they paced; it gave them a peculiar, stilted gait, and until I had seen several of them move like that I did not realise that the peculiar effect was produced by pacing.

We got back to our camp that night at half-past seven. It had been a long day and we were both fairly tired. The next morning it was again very foggy, and we stopped in camp till noon. About mid-day it cleared up a little and we saw seven or eight caribou up the valley about three miles from camp. We went after them, but they were very restless and it took some time before we could get anywhere near them. We did, however, finally get within range, and I picked out a good bull. This bull proved to be a fine mature specimen, which I decided to take for Dr. Nelson. We got back to camp at about 6.30, leaving the trophies to be dealt with on the morrow. The following morning Andy went out to bring in the trophies of this caribou. He took the entire hide with shin

bones complete. I remained in camp and while there saw four sheep on the mountain-side at the back of our camp. Andy returned about 2 P.M. and Al. and Ben came in from Happy River about four o'clock with only two horses. They told me that Baldy had been very sick with kidney or bladder trouble, and had had to leave him behind at Anderson's Road House. Ben was of the opinion that the dwarf willow on which the horses had been feeding had had some effect on their kidneys, and he was afraid that the other two horses were also somewhat affected.

Ben said that when they were near our old camp on Rock Cony Creek they came across three or four moose, and the bull amongst them followed the horses for some distance, coming so close that the horses actually "nickered" at him.

The next day, Andy, Ben, and I went down towards the Styx. We saw a solitary bull caribou, about two miles off on the other side of the valley. This bull a little later on joined up with some cows. We had a long stalk after him. He was evidently chasing the cows, who did not appear at all anxious to make his acquaintance. He finally gave up his object and went off by himself, but unfortunately for us we did not discover this until we had gone a long distance out of our way. While we were following the bull we saw what looked to be the remains of a cache in some twisted and gnarled spruce trees which we found near the Styx River; and, Andy and I going on after the caribou, Ben went down to investigate what we had seen. I finally got a shot at the caribou at very long range, but managed to bag him. He had a fine head with about forty points. We got back to camp very



ANDY AND AS MUCH AS ONE COULD SEE OF THE  
FOURTH CARIBOU AFTER BLIZZARD



TRAIL NEAR HAPPY RIVER ROAD HOUSE



late that night, about 8.30, being delayed on our way because we waited for another bull caribou which we saw chasing some cows, but unfortunately we never got within shooting distance of him.

Ben found a very old prospector's cache amongst the spruce trees, and on a subsequent day Andy and I found on the other bank of the Styx the traces of a camp. The old blazes had grown over a good deal, but we did find a date in one place. It was 1908—probably the last visitors to this valley.

The caribou were now rutting, and the flesh, which is normally a great luxury, being far and away the most tender meat of any mountain game, was unfit to eat.

On the 21st of September Andy and I moved camp about six miles down to the Styx River, Ben bringing the two horses with a few stores and the small 6×8 tent. We made camp at 2 P.M. and in the afternoon we had the first snow. In the morning there was three inches of snow on the ground, but the day cleared up, the sun came out, and by the afternoon the snow had gone. Ben returned to Game View Camp with the caribou head that I had got on the 20th, while Andy and I went down to the South Fork of the Kuskokwim. There was the trail of a big bear down on the sand bars near where we struck the Kuskokwim, but we did not come across him. We had our lunch on the bank of the Kuskokwim, and as we lay in the sun, which had still some heat left in it, we little thought that this was the last fine day we should have.

Opposite the mouth of the Styx River, but still on the true right bank of the Kuskokwim, there are

two large mountains very similar in appearance. On the other side of the Kuskokwim there was another mountain, an ugly, misshapen mass of rock and crag which seemed to have been placed there to enhance the beauty of the twin peaks; or possibly it had been banished to the far side of the river as a punishment for some primeval crime. We christened the two peaks the "Guardians", guardians of the mouth of the Styx, and what more pertinent name could we find for the other mountain than the "Outlaw"?

We returned to camp by a different route and saw no less than three solitary caribou across the valley below us. All these caribou were travelling at considerable speed and were no doubt looking for cows. We tried to cut off one of them, and after one false effort were successful in bagging a fine bull with thirty-seven points to his horns. We got back to our camp about 6 P.M.

During the night the weather changed and in the morning we found eight inches of snow on the ground. By 6 P.M. there was sixteen inches of snow, and when we turned in it was still snowing. It did not snow very much during the night, but the following day it snowed off and on, and by evening two feet of snow lay around our camp. As the photograph of the camp will show, we were just on the fringe of some spruce and were able to get firewood without any great difficulty; but we had no stove, which was still at Game View Camp with Al. Peel, and we did our cooking outside under the shelter of the small tarpaulin.

The 25th of September was a little finer, but there was now a heavy wind with sleet and fine snow. The river began to freeze up and there was slush ice in





STYX RIVER



"THE GUARDIANS" AT THE MOUTH OF THE STYX RIVER



evidence. There was no snow that night, but it was much colder. I was very glad of my reindeer-skin sleeping bag. We began to wonder if Ben would be able to get through with the horses, but I knew that if it was possible for him to do so he would bring them along.

Next day it was a good deal clearer. There was no wind, with the result that we had our fog back again. It was very cold. Ben turned up with two horses that afternoon. Even Ben had to admit that it had been a tough journey. Baldy had died at Anderson's on the 24th, the sorrel was very sick, and Brownie was none too fit. These horses were unaccustomed to rustle for food when the country was covered with snow, and although we had brought a certain amount of grain with us, we had never calculated on having to do without fresh fodder.

The pea vine—a wild bean, I think it is—which is found in many places in Alaska, and which is excellent horse food, was not to be found in the part of the country we were in; but there was excellent bunch grass which Ben assured me was first-class horse fodder, and which the horses seemed to like. The dwarf willow did not appear to agree with the horses, and certainly upset their kidneys. So long as they were eating plenty of bunch grass they probably did not take very much of the willow; but directly the bunch grass became lost in the snow the horses appeared to eat so much of the willow that they were seriously affected. This, together with the exposure and the tough going through practically trailless country, proved too much for our horses.

On the morning of the 27th we left our camp on

the Styx, to try and get to the main camp on Game View Creek. We managed to get in, but the sorrel horse did not, and had to be left about two miles below the camp. Brownie did get in, but only just. Neither of the horses was carrying any load worth speaking about. Al. Peel had a good hot dinner waiting for us, for which we were very thankful. The small 6 x 8 tent we had left behind on the Styx.

There was more snow during the night. Next day about noon Andy and Ben went down to bring in the pack which had been on the sorrel. The sorrel had never moved from where Ben had left him and had probably died soon after dark the previous evening. The afternoon cleared up a little and we took counsel as to the best way of getting back to Anderson's Road House. Brownie was in a bad way, and would probably not last more than a day or two.

When Ben came through from Anderson's Road House he had met Jack Lean, who had been up towards Rock Cony Creek after moose. Jack had killed a moose and had left a small tent standing amongst the willows some five miles from where we were. We thought it would be a good opportunity to utilise this tent while we were moving our stores from Game View Camp. We had only one horse, which was practically on its last legs, and not wishing to abandon our entire outfit, we decided to make two trips to where Jack Lean's tent was. From that spot we would probably be able to get to Anderson's Road House in a day.

On the morning of the 29th we took about half our stores, but were unable to bring Brownie, who was unfit to carry any load. When we arrived at



OUR SMALL TENT NEAR THE STYX



THE LAST OF THE HORSES, 26TH SEPTEMBER  
We abandoned the tent





Jack Lean's tent, a small tent with a small stove in it, Andy and the other boys returned to Game View Camp, where they would spend the night and bring on the rest of the stores and the big tent the following morning. We had had a pretty tough journey, making our way as well as we could through the heavy snow and birch scrub.

I remained in Jack Lean's tent for the night. It was a windy, stormy night and in the morning it was snowing heavily. The trail which we had made the previous day was entirely obliterated. The thermometer showed five degrees above zero at 6 A.M. There was very little dry fuel available for Jack's stove, and it took me no less than three hours to cook my breakfast. It saved me the trouble, at any rate, of cooking lunch. When the boys came along about noon I told them this and blamed the stove, but I think they had a poor opinion of my capabilities of rustling for myself.

They had managed to bring along practically all the stores, but had left a few of the non-essentials behind. We still had some flour, meal, and canned goods at Anderson's Road House; and anyway Jack had the place well stocked with provisions, so we did not wish to overload ourselves with anything that it was possible for us to do without. We still had about twelve miles to go to get to Anderson's Road House, through heavy snow, which was now in places two and three feet deep, and what we had would have to be moved by the three boys with me, the horses having passed out. Although they got Brownie into Jack Lean's camp, he was in very poor shape and did not look like lasting another day. There was a fierce

blizzard blowing all afternoon, and while we built a wind screen for Brownie, he was too far gone to be able to recuperate. Andy had brought the big tent, which we soon erected, and although we had merely a sand bar from which we scraped the snow, to act as the floor of our tent, we were able to get fairly dry and warm with the help of the stove.

The following morning, the 1st of October, we awoke to find that the blizzard had passed away and the sky was fine and clear. Poor Brownie was so far gone that Ben had to put him out of his misery. So passed away the last of the horses, horses which had served us well but from which we knew now, in the light of our new experience, we had asked too much. The severity of the weather, coupled with the difficulty of obtaining good fresh fodder, produced a state of affairs against which only horses accustomed to live in the mountains, which these had not been, could hope to strive.

We were unable to move all our goods in one trip, so, taking light loads and leaving the tent standing, into which we put the remaining outfit, we left at 8 A.M. for Anderson's. We had a pretty rough journey, a good deal of which we made down the bars of the Happy River. Occasionally we were into drift snow up to our waists. The river was full of slush ice and in places was forming anchor ice, that peculiar and unexplainable phenomenon which is not uncommon in Alaska mountain creeks.

We saw four or five moose on a snow bank at the foot of the mountain. They were most conspicuous figures silhouetted against the fresh snow. There was a big bull amongst them. We arrived at Anderson's





ANDERSON'S ROAD HOUSE



JACK LEAN AND CHARLIE SCHULTZ AT DOOR OF  
ANDERSON'S ROAD HOUSE



Road House at 3.30 in the afternoon. Jack Lean and Charlie Schultz were both there. On our arrival the thing that seemed to impress Charlie Schultz most was the magnificent beards that we had grown. He remarked that, "At any rate, you fellows can grow some hair on your faces". Jack Lean showed us where we could "bunk" in the living quarters in the road house, and it was not long before we were enjoying a good hot meal. The last note in my diary on that day reads as follows: "Comfortable and warm at last". I think we might leave it at that.

We were now faced with the problem of how we were to get down to Happy River Road House, a distance of thirty miles, with a good deal of outfit. The trophies of three caribou and one moose were still at Anderson's Road House and the only method of getting our outfit away was by Jack Lean's dog team; but this dog team would not be able to take the entire outfit in one trip. We arranged that evening that Jack should take down a load to Pontella's, an old abandoned prospector's cache about half-way down to Happy River Road House. Jack left early the following morning; Andy and the other boys went back to where we had left our tent to bring in the balance of our bedding, stores, etc. They took snow-shoes with them. I remained at Anderson's Road House and was well looked after by Charlie Schultz. Charlie, who had arrived about a week previously, told me that he had had an awful time bringing up the dogs with a light load from Happy River. The trail was unbroken and in some places he had heavy snow to negotiate; in fact, he had been caught in the same

blizzard that had tied Andy and me to our tent on the Styx for three or four days.

Next day Jack Lean came back with the dog team about one o'clock, and Andy and the others came in at half-past two. They had had to leave behind them the big tent and the stove; but we had all the essentials necessary for the rest of our journey and we could not grumble at having had to abandon so little.

On the 4th of October we left Anderson's with Jack Lean and his dog team—Charlie Schultz remained behind in charge of the road house—for Canyon Creek, which we hoped to make that evening. In Jack's road house there were only three pairs of snow-shoes, one pair being small, more suitable for a child than a man. Jack and Andy took the two big pairs and Al. Peel paddled along with the child's pair. I did the best I could without any. Anyway, I was unused to snow-shoes and would probably have been much more tired had I attempted to negotiate the journey with them.

The trail had been broken by Charlie Schultz, but although the top was frozen in places and generally carried one's weight, every now and again one broke through the eighteen inches or so of snow beneath one's feet. We made camp about 4.30 P.M. amongst a nice grove of spruce timber where we were fairly comfortable, even though we only had a small tarpaulin for a shelter. It snowed and sleeted during the night. The next day we continued our journey to Happy River Road House, and although we only had a little over twelve miles to do, we did not get in until 5.30 P.M. The last three miles between Harding Lake



HAPPY RIVER ROAD HOUSE AND JACK LEAN'S DOG TEAM







THE TROPHIES AT SUSITNA STATION



and Happy River were very bad going. In the evening the snow turned to rain, which continued all night.

The next morning it was impossible for Jack to take the dog team back to Pontella's to get the remains of the outfit, so we had a "day of rest" at the road house.

The following day was a little better, and Jack, Andy, and Ben went out with the dogs to complete the transport of the remaining stores. They returned the next evening, having had a very tough journey. It had snowed and rained off and on all the time they had been away. We re-salted all the headskins and hides ready for their journey to Anchorage. These two days it snowed incessantly, but on the 11th, it being a little clearer, we decided to continue our journey down the Skwentna River. Jack let us have his boat, which he would not require again this winter. Ben, who appeared to be at a loose end, agreed to work during the winter with Jack and remained in charge of the Happy River Road House.

I was very sorry to part with Ben, who had been a hard-working and cheerful member of our party. He had been very distressed at the loss of the horses, but it was in no way due to any lack of skill or labour on his part that the animals had been unable to come through.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE END OF THE TRAIL

Peace! I thought I had gained it, I swore that my tale was told;  
By my hair that is grey I swore it, by my eyes that are slow to see;  
Yet what does it all avail me? to-night, to-night as of old,  
Out of the dark I hear it—the Northland calling to me.

R. W. SERVICE.

THE Skwentna River was now much lower than when we had come up it nearly two months before, and the water was almost quite clear. We hoped to be able to make the fifty miles down the river to the Skwentna Road House in the day. We pushed off from the landing at 8 A.M., saying good-bye to Ben and Jack Lean with many regrets. Jack had come to our help at a critical time with his dog team; had we been unable to obtain the use of this team we might have had to remain for some weeks at Anderson's Road House before we could have got out. We made good time down the Skwentna River; in fact, in many places we had to go very cautiously, the current being so rapid that there seemed a likelihood of our being unable to control the boat.

When we had passed the mouth of the Chusalitna River we came to the buildings which had been used by Jack Lean, MacIlray, and Rimmer to cure their salmon in the early fall; and as it was very nearly dark we discussed the advisability of stopping there



CARIBOU SHOT ON 23RD SEPTEMBER NEAR OUR STYX CAMP



for the night. We were now within a mile or two of the Skwentna Crossing Road House, and we thought that we would have no difficulty in making the rest of the journey that evening. Here we made a very grave mistake. It should be taken as a maxim which should never be deviated from that, in travelling down one of these Alaskan rivers where the current is very rapid and the driftwood and sweepers very frequent, directly the day is so far advanced that it is difficult to see the exact course of the current, navigation should cease. About ten minutes after we had passed the buildings near the Chusalitna River we came to a spot where the river divided into two channels. The right-hand one, which we took, suddenly shallowed up, and we found that we could progress no farther, so we backed out of it and swung the boat round into the other channel. Entirely due to the darkness the exact course of the current was deceptive, and in swinging round the point, which was after all only an enormous accumulation of sand and timber, we missed the channel and were almost immediately driven sideways on to the edge of the driftwood; the bow of the boat was driven under a sweeper and before we could do anything half the boat was under water with the stern high and dry. I was sitting in the stern; Al. was amidships, Andy in the bow. Andy apparently jumped on to the driftwood to try and free the bow the moment he felt the boat going under, and I suppose finding that the current was too strong for him, he jumped towards the boat, missed his footing and disappeared in the mass of whirling water amongst the driftwood just in front of the bow of our boat.

This had all taken only a second or two. I had jumped to my feet and scrambled out of the boat on to the driftwood. Al. ran forward and, turning round to me, shouted, "I fear for Andy; he has disappeared". Although Andy had disappeared for an instant, he had apparently never let go of the side of the boat, and almost so soon as Al. had rushed forward to try and rescue him, he reappeared, pulling himself on to the sweeper which was holding down the bow of the boat.

A good deal of our outfit was in the stern of the boat; in fact, I had been sitting on my sleeping bag, which was on top of the pelts which were done up in sacking. All the caribou heads and one of the moose heads were right at the stern of the boat, and we had no difficulty in unloading these and throwing them on to the wood pile. Having got everything out that we could see, we examined the boat and found that it was securely wedged underneath a big sweeper and was in such a position that there was no danger of it turning over or being washed away. So far we had been unable to learn what had happened to all the sheep heads and one of the moose heads. My rifles, which were near the bow of the boat, we hoped had not been tipped out, but what was much more important than bothering about these things was to get a fire going to try and dry ourselves.

Andy was soaked right through. Al. was fairly wet. I had got off the best. The wood on the pile was mostly sodden with water, but we at last found some dry timber with which we were able to start a fire. Our cooking pots had disappeared, but we managed to find some food and a can in which we made some

coffee. Andy and Al. did not enjoy a very comfortable night on the wood jam. I got into my sleeping bag and slept comparatively comfortably on the snow.

Before we settled down for the night we got a pole and sounded in the bottom of the fore-end of the boat to see if we could locate any of our trophies or outfit which were under water out of sight. I could quite plainly feel some of the sheep heads, and considering that they had not shifted very much from the position that they had been placed in when we left Happy River, I did not feel much worried about the rifles. What we were afraid of was that the boat itself might have been damaged, and if this was so we might have some difficulty in getting down to the Skwentna Road House, because we appeared to be on a log jam in the middle of the Skwentna River. Fortunately we had got one of the axes out of the boat, and in the morning, after we had cut away two or three of the logs in the jam, we were able to swing the boat clear, and towing it to a small sand spit at the downstream end of the log jam were able to examine it thoroughly. The sheep heads were all safe, so were the rifles; the skull and horns of the first moose were missing and were never found. Three pack sacks containing clothes, etc., had also disappeared. All the cooking pots and a box containing provisions had gone.

We examined the bottom of the boat carefully and found to our great relief that she was seaworthy. The previous evening when we had been caught in the driftwood I had managed to rescue a box containing my clothes, which was under water; in fact it was under water for about ten minutes. In this box were

all the films of the photographs I had taken, but I had put them in a small tin box; and when packing, to prevent the tin box rattling, I had wrapped it carefully with a very thick flannel shirt, which fortunately kept the water from finding its way in any great quantity into the tin box containing the films. They were practically undamaged, although they had actually been under water for several minutes. My camera had also been under water and had got thoroughly wet, but I was able to dry it out and get it into fairly good condition when we reached Skwentna Road House.

We got away at last and reached the Skwentna Road House in about half an hour. Here we met Charlie Smith, who had come up to see MacIlray and Rimmer. We told him about our mishap, and he congratulated us on getting off so lightly. We indeed had a very narrow escape and might very easily have lost the entire outfit. Had the boat failed to jam itself amongst the logs nothing could have saved it from sinking. Although search was made for our lost goods later on when the river froze up, nothing was ever found except Al.'s pack sack.

The night was spent at Skwentna Road House and we left the next day with Charlie Smith for MacDougal, stopping on the way at a ranch belonging to a man named Gray, who had been putting up fish for the use of dog teams during the winter. Gray lived entirely by himself, his only companion being a dog which he called Rawl. Gray looked upon Rawl as his partner, and whenever he had anything consigned to his ranch he always had it addressed to Gray & Rawl.



We arrived at MacDougal at 3 P.M. and in the afternoon we caught some rainbow trout. Charlie Smith was a keen angler, and before we left the next morning was busy fishing again. We left MacDougal at 8 A.M. the following day, the 14th of October, and arrived at Susitna Station at 2 P.M. This is reckoned to be a distance of about thirty-six miles, and considering that we were going easily with the stream one can appreciate the swiftness of the current which would take us down in six hours. Mrs. Johnston had opened the road house at Susitna, and we put up there for the night.

I got all the trophies out of the boat at Susitna and took a photograph of them outside Mr. Healey's store. Unfortunately I had to leave one of the caribou heads out of the picture, there being insufficient space to include them all.

We found upon arrival at Susitna Station that Captain Johnston was expected the next day from Anchorage, and we hoped to be able to arrange with him to take us back to Anchorage without delay. Johnston turned up about noon on the 15th, and we left at 6 P.M., arriving at Anchorage in the early morning of the following day. I put up again at the Anchorage Hotel and was once more made extremely comfortable by Mr. and Mrs. Reed.

At Anchorage I found that the *Alameda* was due at Seward on Saturday the 22nd, which gave me the whole week in which to pack up my trophies and get down to Seward. Andy and Al., who were both good carpenters, prepared the cases from lumber that we were able to purchase in Anchorage. The trophies for Dr. Nelson, that is to say, the two entire caribou

pelts, skulls, and antlers, I despatched direct to Washington, D.C. The group of sheep for the British Museum I despatched direct to London, and my own trophies I sent to Jonas Brothers of Denver, Colo. I had still to collect the bear-skins at Seward. These I intended sending to Messrs. Rowland Ward, Ltd., London, because I wished to have them made up into rugs which I should leave in England. A heavy bear rug is scarcely suitable for a house in a hot climate like the Malay Peninsula. Andy took his sheep head and scalp to a local taxidermist at Anchorage, who appeared to have considerable skill in setting up such heads, several trophies being in evidence in his store.

While I was in Anchorage I made the acquaintance of Ira A. Minnick of Indianapolis, Ind. He had been in the Kenai Peninsula after moose, sheep, and bears, having gone in from Seward, come out at the mouth of the Kenai River, and thence up Cook's Inlet. He had obtained some fine trophies of moose, sheep, and black bears, but had not been successful in getting brown bear. Mr. Minnick was glad to meet Andy Simons because it enabled him to come to an arrangement with Andy for a bear hunt the following year in the country where we had been in the spring. Subsequently I learned that Mr. Minnick had visited Izembek Creek and had obtained three fine specimens of brown bears. An account of his trip appeared in *Outdoor Life* for February 1924.

Mr. Minnick and I had long discussions regarding the hunting in Alaska. Later on we were fellow passengers on the s.s. *Alameda* and had plenty of opportunities of comparing notes.

On the 19th of October we left Anchorage by the 9 A.M. train, arriving at Seward at 4.15 P.M. I found my bear-skins in perfect condition, and after packing them up handed them over to the express agents for shipment to London.

The *Alameda* was due in Seward about 10 P.M. on the evening of Saturday the 22nd, but on arrival in the harbour, when turning to come alongside the wharf, some mishap in the steering gear resulted in the ship running on to the beach. Fortunately this happened when the tide was low and she was able to get clear in two or three hours. We left Seward at 4 A.M. on the morning of Sunday the 21st.

Andy, Al. Peel, and Mrs. Simons came down to the wharf to see us off. I was genuinely sorry to part with my companions of many months. Both Andy and Al. had been untiring in their efforts to make the long trip into the Rainy Pass country a success, and with their help, and the help of Jack and Ben, I had been able to obtain trophies of which no person need be ashamed.

We arrived in Seattle at 3 P.M. on Sunday the 30th of October, and I found after going up to the Arctic Club with my luggage that I had just missed a steamer to Hong Kong and that I should have to wait in Seattle about eighteen days. Mr. Minnick and his family remained in Seattle for a day and then returned to their home. There was nothing for me to do but await my steamer, the s.s. *Tyndareus*, a large Blue Funnel liner belonging to Holt's, which was scheduled to leave Seattle on the 18th of November. During my stay I went over to Victoria on Vancouver Island for a few days, the rest of the time that

I was in Seattle passing very quickly, thanks to the kindness and hospitality of many friends in that city.

I did not reach Singapore until the 22nd of December. There I remained over Christmas and returned to my home in Pahang, in the Federated Malay States, on the 27th of December 1921, after an absence of about a year.

About six months afterwards my moose, sheep, and caribou heads arrived from the United States, having been beautifully modelled by Jonas Brothers of Denver, and are now hanging in my house in Pahang.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### AFTERTHOUGHTS

After having spent several months on the trip into Ptarmigan Valley, a trip on which we had to feel our way and make arrangements as we went along, because, except for the information received from Charlie Smith, we had really no knowledge of the country, nor had we any idea what we might have to contend with in carrying out our transport, one naturally looks back and analyses the experiences gone through. There is no doubt that we attempted to handle our transport arrangements in a way which was bound to prove a failure. Charlie Smith was very nearly right when he told us that he thought we could not get through in the month of August with the methods we had proposed to utilise. We certainly did get through to Anderson's Road House, but for the greater part of the distance our horses were travelling with nothing on their backs, and we had to transport the stores by some other method.

Undoubtedly we made good use of the horses between Happy River Road House and our camps in the Ptarmigan Valley; but this work on poor fodder proved too much for the horses, as my story has shown, and it was only because we did not get very far away from Anderson's Road House that we were able to get out of that country without encountering really serious difficulties. It is true that the winter commenced about a fortnight earlier than usual, and we were more or less taken unawares, but one must not take any risks in a country where you have brilliant sunshine one day and a shrieking, howling blizzard the next; and we were taking considerable risks by remaining in the Ptarmigan Valley when once our horses appeared to be breaking up.

If, at any future date, I decided to take a hunting trip into the Rainy Pass country I should make very different arrangements. I would not consider for a moment the use of horses, but rather arrange to send on all my heavy stores the previous winter, and have them distributed in suitable places for our fall hunting. For instance, a capable man like Jack Lean would be perfectly willing to make all arrangements to take stores up from Nancy by dog sled to Anderson's Road House and from there to the Styx River, and if required, to the mouth of the Hartman River, making the necessary caches where the goods would be stored. When the time came to go into the country, all one would have to transport would be one's clothes, arms, and a small amount of food for the journey. One would still have to tow a boat up the Skwentna River, but a much lighter boat could be used, because it would not be necessary to take a load of more

than a couple of hundred pounds or so. One would have to make up one's mind to remain in the hunting country until one could get out by dog sled, which would probably be towards the end of October or early November. This would fit in well with the arrangements that one would wish to make if going as far as the Hartman River.

The moose and caribou are not ready to shoot until early in September, their horns not being free of velvet until about then. The sheep would have to be hunted towards the end of August or early in September, because later on it would probably be found impossible, owing to snow, to negotiate the rough mountain country where they would be found. The only difficulty that I can see would be the transport of one's personal belongings from Happy River to the hunting country, and I think that a person would have to make up his mind to the fact that these belongings would have to be transported by packers. Going into the country in the late summer it would not be necessary to take anything but light tarpaulins. All one's gear in the way of tents and a stove would have been sent ahead the previous winter. I feel sure that any sportsman who undertook to go into the country that I visited, even to go farther and into the Hartman River country, would find that he would be more than amply rewarded for any difficulties he might have to contend with by the trophies that he would obtain.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before I close my account of my hunting in Alaska and the remarks that I have made in this chapter, I should like to touch on the question of the

use of game meat in road houses. At the time when I was in Alaska (1921) it was illegal for any road house keeper to sell game meat at a road house. It would have been apparent to any thinking person that this law must have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance; and I ask my readers if they consider it reasonable to suppose that in an isolated spot like that where we found Anderson's Road House, the proprietor of such a place would deny his travellers the privilege of eating the only fresh meat that it would be possible for them to obtain, when it would be no difficult task to serve caribou or moose at any meal. I am fully aware that enormous waste has taken place in road houses and mining camps in the past when game was plentiful, and frequently only the choicest cuts were utilised as food; but my point is this, that the law should recognise that a regulation prohibiting the use of game meats in parts of the country where no other meat is obtainable is impossible of enforcement. Therefore make it possible for road house keepers and others similarly situated, *where their only source of fresh meat supply is game*, to be licensed under the game laws to take a certain number of game animals, as circumstances will indicate, for the use of their road house or camp.

Directly you do this you have a large section of the more intelligent and law-abiding public entirely on your side over the general protection of game from wanton slaughter. For instance, take a man like Jack Lean, who as proprietor of Anderson's Road House would be allowed under some such regulation to shoot, say, six mature moose and six mature caribou for use in his business, providing meals for travellers

who use his road house. Jack Lean would take very good care that others, unlicensed and unauthorised, would not come into his part of the country and poach the game. He would assist in the administration of the game laws, and could be looked upon as equivalent to an honorary game warden for that part of the country in which he was domiciled. This method could be made to apply to many parts of the country where game was plentiful and other fresh meat non-existent; but permits would only be issued after the proper authorities for the administration of these regulations had satisfied themselves that it was necessary to make such exceptions to the general provisions of the game laws.

I yield to no one in my advocacy for the proper administration of game laws and the adequate conservation of the fauna of the country, but I feel sure that those persons who were given a privilege such as I have indicated would be staunch supporters of those whose duty it was to enforce the game laws.

\* \* \* \* \*

After Dr. Nelson had received the specimens of male caribou from the Rainy Pass country he informed me that he was of the opinion that these caribou were the variety known as *Rangifer stonei*, a variety which had been found previously only in the Kenai Peninsula and which were believed to have become extinct. Dr. Nelson gave me permission to make use of this expression of opinion. I understand that later on further specimens were obtained of female caribou from this same part of the country, which tended to strengthen Dr. Nelson in his identification. It is interesting to know that it was possible to redis-



cover a variety of caribou which was supposed to be extinct. Unfortunately I had been unable to collect any bears for Dr. Nelson from the same part of Alaska.

The group of mountain sheep (*Ovis dalli*) that I obtained for the British Museum were duly set up by Messrs. Rowland Ward, Ltd., and can now be seen in the Mammal Galleries at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington. I was not able to collect specimens of the Canadian otter for our National Collection.

The successful preparation of trophies in the field is always a matter of considerable importance to the sportsman, who naturally wants to be able to have some permanent record of his trip. In Alaska it is customary to use only salt, and so long as the salt is applied in sufficient quantities and as soon as possible after the beast has been killed, it is a perfectly satisfactory preservative. Skins so treated will travel quite well and will remain fresh and sweet for many months, provided they are not stored in a warm place. Unfortunately, skins cured with salt must be thoroughly freed of all salt before they are tanned and prepared for setting up, if by any chance the finished trophy is to be sent to a damp and hot country. I have suffered much from the salt that has been left in some of the trophies that I have obtained in Alaska and which I now have in the Malay Peninsula. The salt which was left in the skins seems to collect all the moisture from the hot and close atmosphere which is inevitable in any house in the Malay Peninsula, with the result that I have seen a pool of water on the floor which had dripped off the neck of a moose, and have

actually wrung the water out of the neck ruff of a caribou. Skins in such a condition are liable ultimately to rot, and I am afraid that I may have difficulty in keeping some of my Alaskan trophies if they remain in the Malay Peninsula. I think it would be worth while considering the advisability of using alum instead of salt on any headskins from trophies obtained in Alaska, if it is intended to send the finished article to a hot and damp climate; or as an alternative, if salt is used, to make perfectly certain that the taxidermist who undertakes to set up the trophies will remove all salt from the pelts before they are tanned. I believe Messrs. Rowland Ward, Ltd., of Piccadilly, London, have some process which ensures that all the salt in a skin is absolutely removed before the skin is dressed. No doubt other taxidermists should be able to achieve a similar result.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

When I came back from King Cove I travelled with an oldtimer who had been for many years prospecting in Alaska and who had never "struck it rich". This man, who was known far and wide to all old Alaskans as "Charlie Bearclaw"—I believe his name was really Barraclough,—was long past his prime, but his spirit as a pioneer and an adventurer was still as strong as ever. He was anxious to get to Juneau, so got off at Hoonah with me and I took him across to Juneau in the cannery tender. He told me many stories of his prospecting in Alaska. I remember one story related to a place where he and another man had put down during one winter sixty-seven prospecting pits, out of which they dug what they thought was good pay gravel. When they had a wash-up in the

spring they merely found a few dollars' worth of gold. Charlie told me that at the end of the wash-up, when they were absolutely broke, he said to his partner, "Well, Bill, I never want to see another prospecting hole in my life". This was some years previous to our meeting, and I asked Charlie where he was going to now. His eyes lit up and he said, "I've just heard of a creek up in the Broad Pass country which I believe is the real thing, and I'm going up there to try my luck". We landed at Juneau and I did not see Charlie again; but the impression he gave me has remained in my memory, the impression of a man oldish in body but young in spirit, still anxious to carry on the work of a pioneer.

These are the real pioneers, men such as Andy Simons, Al. Peel, Jack Lean, Ben Krattcer, and a host of others. They belong to the type which all over the world has made it possible for the merchant, the banker, and the lawyer to follow their footsteps into new countries along the trails they have broken. One has to live with them in the wilds to appreciate their strength, their resource, their independence, and their persistence; qualities which make it possible for them to carry on in isolated places and to blaze the trail under enormous difficulties which the less hardened sons of the cities find beyond their capabilities.



## INDEX

- Afognak Island, 87  
*Alameda*, s.s., 69, 128, 219  
 Alaska, Southern, country, 97  
*Alaska*, s.s., 6  
 Alaskan: friendliness of people, 9; Northern Railway, 9, 13  
 Alphonse, 93  
 Anchorage, 136, 145, 217  
  
 Bank of California, Manager, 6  
 Baughman, Dr., game warden, 9  
 "Bearclaw, Charlie", 226  
 Bears, black: first sight of, 19; tracks, 28; eleven seen, 28; number in litter, 28; photographing, 40; plentiful in Killey Valley, 41; more seen, 154  
 Bears, brown: large skin, 15, 16; tracks, 55, 149; hunter killed by, 88; first seen at Cold Bay, 95; killed by E., 100, 116, 120; stalking, 102; misadventures with, 103, 118, 123; strange contortions of, 105; killed, 106; cubs, 109; family of, 110; many seen, 113; excavations made by, 114; rapid pace of, 114; large track of, 115; rutting, 115; kill last bear, 126; difficulties of skinning, 126; great weight of skin, 127; measurements, 129; colouring, 130; extermination, 133; eating sheep, 195  
 Beaver, 150  
  
 Benjamin: Creek, 19; Valley, 20  
 Berg, C. C., 70  
 Bering Sea, flowers at, 120  
 Black bass, 8  
 Black foxes, breeding of, 17, 37  
 Blizzard, 33, 46  
 Boat, built by Andy and Lodge, 16  
 British Museum, 75, 153; sheep shot for, 166; group of sheep obtained for, 168; obtain ewe and lamb for, 195, 225  
 Bronx Park, 76  
 Brown & Hawkins' store, 12, 139  
 Burnham, John, 76  
  
*Catherine D.*, s.s., 128  
*Cedric*, s.s., 76  
 Chusalitna River, 148, 214  
 Cochin China coast, animals on, 5  
 Cogswell & Harrison, 11  
 Cold Bay, 89, 92, 93, 127; difficulty of entering, 94  
 Conies, 156, 159  
 Cordova, 7  
 Cormorants and gulls, 17  
 Cottonwood Creek, 17, 18, 46; leave, for moose, 47  
 Cross fox, 36, 38  
  
 Denver Museum, 80  
 Dixon Entrance, Gulf of Alaska, 86  
 Dog team, 210; winter food for, 216

# 230 TO FAR WESTERN ALASKA

Dollman, Captain Guy, 76  
Ducks, mergansers and butter-  
balls, 17

*Ecuador*, s.s., 5, 7

Foraker, Mount, 148  
Fuller, Mr., 69  
Funny River, 49

Game: regulations, 6; sanctuary,  
132; preservation, 187, "View  
Creek", 199; laws, 223  
Geese, Emperor, 120  
Gilfillan, Mr., 89, 113  
Gray and "Rawl", 216  
Grayling, 144, 149, 152  
Grizzly bear, 151, 155; feeding  
on blue-berries, 177  
Ground squirrels, 155  
Gun, small bore, 12

Halibut banks, 86  
Happy River, 140  
Harding Lake, 153  
Harmer, Sir Sidney, 76  
Hartman River, 156, 196  
Hayes River, 148  
Healy, Mr., 148  
Hoonah, 128  
Hornaday, Dr., 76  
Horses: difficulty with, 143;  
feeding on dwarf willow, 202;  
sickness, 205; lose, 206  
Hughes Lake, 154

Iditarod trail, 146  
Indian hunters, 185; destruction  
of game by, 186  
Inside Passage, 69  
Izembek: Bay, 89, 95; Creek,  
98, 109

*J. J.*, motor boat, 142; difficulty  
with horses on, 143

James, Harry, 80  
Johnston, Captain J., 141, 217  
Jonas Bros., of Denver, 218, 220  
Juneau, 6

Kaiser, Bill, packer, 13, 70  
Katmai, 90  
Kenai Lake, 9; only person hunt-  
ing at, 10: *en route* to, 14, 16  
Kenai Peninsula: moose on, 51;  
end of journey in, 68; sheep in,  
164  
Kenai River, 16; poling up, 69  
Ketchikan, 83  
Killey River, 19, 48; Valley, 19,  
23  
King Cove, fisheries at, 92  
King's County Creek, 48  
Kodiak Island, 85, 86  
Krattcer, Ben, 137, 227  
Kuskokwim, 84; River, 156, 197

La Touche, 8  
Lean, Jack, 140, 221, 227  
Leonard's Harbour, 92  
Lodge, W. L., cook, 14, 70  
Lucas, Harry: joins party, 17;  
leaves Mr. Hubbard, 70  
*Lutra canadensis*, 76

McCormick, E. O., 6, 9  
MacDougal Station, 144  
McGuire, Mr., 7, 75, 80; *In the  
Alaskan-Yukon Game Lands*,  
80  
MacIlray, Mr., 140, 146, 216  
McKinley, Mount, 148  
McPherson, Mr., 6  
Mail-carrying, 147  
Malay States: time of journey  
from, 22; return to, 70, 220  
Mallinckrodt, Jr., Ted, 79, 89,  
99; his live bear cubs, 79  
Mather, Mr., 78  
Mink, 108

- Minnick, Ira A., 218  
 Moffat: Bay, 98; Cove, 116  
 Montague Island, 8  
 Moose: holes dug by, 18; first sight of, 19; call of cow, 21; calling a bull, 44; tracks, 49, 154; feeding, 49; quantity of, 54; photographing, 54; remains eaten by bear, 55, 59; kill first, 57; measurements, 58, 66, 185, 191; movements of young bull, 62; bags second bull, 66; alarm of cows, 64; find carcass of, 151; seen at Rock Cony Creek, 159; fifteen seen at Ptarmigan Valley, 183; time of rut, 183; kill moose, 185, 191; weight of antlers, 191; loss of horns, 215  
 "Moose Horn Trail", 48  
 Morgan, Mr., purser of *Alaska*, 7  
 Mosquitoes, 145, 154  
 Motor schooner *A-1*, 81  
  
 Nagley's store, 143  
 Nancy, 136  
 National Museum, Washington, 149, 153  
 Nelson, Dr., 75, 149, 189  
  
*Ochotona collaris*, 159  
 Otter, Canadian, 76  
*Outdoor Life*, 133, 218  
 Outfit, bought at Seattle, 11  
 Overloading boat, 84  
*Ovis dalli*, 27, 76, 157, 164, 175  
  
 Pacific American Fisheries Company, 128  
 Page, Captain, 4  
 "Parkies", 155  
 Pavlof: Bay, 89, 90; Mountain, 97, 98, 109  
 Peel, L. A., guide, 87, 227  
 Permit, 6, 10  
  
 Photographing: bears, 41; moose, 54  
*Plectrophanes nivalis*, 198  
 Popof Island, 90  
 Porcupine, 130  
 Port Liscum, 7  
 Portage Creek, 183  
 Post River, 179  
 Preble, Mr., 78  
 Preservation: of trophies, 28, 58, 225, 226; of game, 187  
*President*, s.s., 69  
 Ptarmigan, 131, 159, 199; Valley, 155, 183, 220  
  
 Radclyffe, Captain, *Big Game Shooting in Alaska*, 129  
 Rainy Pass, 140, 156  
*Rangifer: granti*, 95, 109; *stonei*, 224  
 Red fox, 37  
 Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Frank, 137, 217  
 Resurrection Bay, magnificent scenery, 8  
 Revell, Mrs., 15  
 Rifles, 11, 101  
 Rimmer, Mr., 140, 146, 216  
 Road horses, 146  
 Rock Cony Creek, 156  
 Rohn River, 179  
 Rungius, Carl, paintings, 77  
  
 St. Louis, 78  
 Salmon, 17, 83, 144, 146, 149; spawning, 150; factory at Uzinki Island, 87; cannery at Uyak, 90  
 Salt in preservation, 225  
 San Francisco, 5, 69, 80  
 Sand Point, 87, 90  
 Schultz, Charlie, 146  
 Scull, E. Marshall, *Hunting in the Arctic and Alaska*, 3

- Seattle, 5, 69, 80, 81, 219  
 Seladang, 107  
 Seward, 6, 8, 13, 69, 135, 219  
 Sexton, Mr., 8  
 Sheep: scarcity of, 23; country, 20; first sight of, 24; first killed, 26; measurements, 27, 35, 44, 164, 168, 176; difficulties of stalking, 32; a good ram shot, 35; unfavourable conditions, 37; misadventure with, 38, 43; killed at Rock Cony, 164, 167; tameness of, 163, 169; many seen, 170, 194; killed by Andy, 175; sight and scent, 179; with frost-bitten feet, 164  
 Sheldon, Charles: fine library, 78;  
*Wilderness of the Upper Yukon*, 7  
 Shelikof Straits, 89  
 Shipping strike, 81  
 Simons, Andy, guide, 8, 9, 10, 85, 87, 227; arrive at his cabin, 15; kills black bear, 52; services of, 70; kills sheep, 175  
 Singapore, 3, 75, 220  
 Singer, Mr. and Mrs., 82  
 Siwash camp, 24, 29  
 Skilak Lake, 13, 16, 17, 47  
 Skin preservation, 28, 58, 225, 226  
 Skwentna River, 140, 145; boat upset on, 214  
 Smith, Charlie, 155, 216  
 Snow: heavy, 204; difficulties in, 208  
 Snow buntings, 198  
 Snowy River, 14  
 "Speeder", 12; breakdown, 13  
 Steedman, Mr., 79; fine brown bear, 79, 87, 88, 99  
 Stores: bought at Seward, 11, 70; arrangements for, 221  
 Styx River, 156, 197  
 Susitna Station, 143, 217  
 Sykes Expedition, 89, 90  
 Transport arrangements, 222  
 Trout, 82, 114, 127, 144, 217; fishing in Olympic Mountains, 82  
*Tyndareus*, s.s., 219  
*Ursus gyas*, 79, 99  
 Uyak, salmon cannery at, 90  
 Uzinki Island, 85; salmon factory at, 87  
 Valdez, 7  
 Victoria, 219  
 Ward, Messrs. Rowland, 218, 225, 226  
 Weir, Mr., 9, 12  
 Winchester rifle, bought at Seattle, 12  
 Winds, violent, 30  
 Windsor Hotel, Cordova, 7  
 Wolverine, 130  
 Yetna River, 144

THE END







